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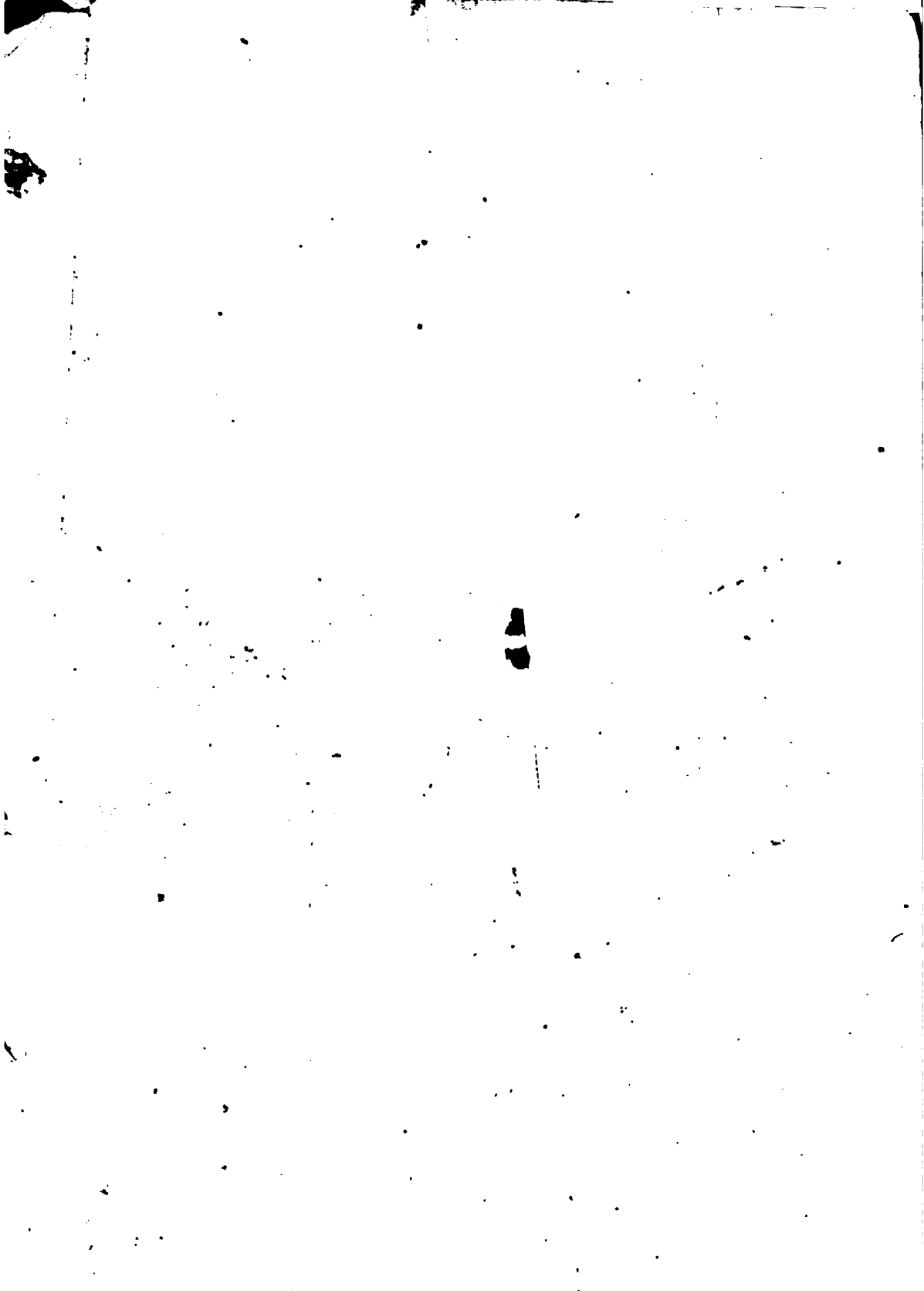
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Thomas Bell





E X P O S I T I O N

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EPISTLE of PAUL the Apostle

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R O M A N S,

WITH LARGE

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS;

DELIVERED IN SEVERAL LECTURES.

By the Late REVEREND,

Learned, Pious, and Faithful Servant of JESUS CHRIST,

Mr. J O H N B R O W N,

Sometime Minister of the Gospel at Wamphray in Annandale, and afterwards Minister
to the Scots Congregation at Rotterdam in Holland.

Carefully printed from the AUTHOR'S OWN MANUSCRIPT.

E D I N B U R G H :

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The P R E F A C E.

IT is said, *The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance*, Psal. cxii. 6. and, *The memory of the just is blessed*, Prov. x. 7. Altho' it is now near a hundred years since the Rev. learned and pious author fell asleep in the Lord, and is gone to receive the fruit of his labours, from his Lord and Master, whom he served in the gospel; yet the wisdom of Divine Providence cannot but be noticed in the preservation of the author's own manuscript of the following lectures so long, and now raising it from the dust of obscurity, and bringing it forth to the light, which, under the divine blessing, will no doubt be useful for clearing up and setting in a proper light, the necessary truths of the christian faith and doctrine, therein contained, especially the great and fundamental doctrine of justification so fully and largely treated of in the inspired epistle, and so consequently by the judicious expositor. It is presumed, it will be needless to make any apology for the publication of the following lectures; as they who are acquainted with Mr. Brown's singular judiciousness in the management of such subjects as he has undertaken, will certainly make any of the remains of such an eminent minister and Christian very acceptable. Those who have been conversant with his writings will stand in need of little other voucher of genuineness beside the lectures themselves, as they evidently carry in them such marks as have always distinguished his performances.

It is not without ground to be feared, that, to the bulk of the present age, the following lectures will seem as idle tales, yet to such as have their senses exercised to discern good and evil, they will appear words fitly spoken, as apples of gold in pictures of silver, wisely calculated both for informing the judgment and reforming the heart.

It appears that the author designed the following Lectures for the press, on account of the correctness and compleatness of his manuscript; so that unless it be the prefixing a title, preface, and introduction to the first seven chapters, it has stood in need of no other help, either by adding or impairing. Such as hesitate any manner of way with respect to the agreement of the printed copy, in any word or sentence, with the manuscript, may be satisfied by comparing, as the manuscript is preserved in the hands of the Publishers at Edinburgh. That the public has been so long deprived of such a valuable and useful exposition, can no otherways be accounted for, than that the persons into whose custody it has been, had never fallen on proper means for having it published. What further seems necessary in this way, shall be only,

I. More particularly to mention a few things concerning the author.

II. To notice the scope of the sacred epistle, and the author's exposition.

III. To point out a very few reasons which appear to render the present publication the more necessary.

I. The deserved reputation the author has already gained in the church of Christ, not only for his extensive abilities, singular piety and holiness, but his useful labours in the work of the ministry, and fruits of his study, many years since gone abroad in the world, will very justly supersede almost any thing necessary to be said about him; such singular and excellent treatises, both in the polemic and practical way, have undoubtedly evinced to unprejudiced persons, his good learning and solid judgment; and that

he has been every way a workman who needed not be ashamed*. The great Mr. Rutherford in one of his letters from Aberdeen to the Author's mother says, "I rejoice to hear your son is coming to visit Christ, and taste of his love: I hope he shall not lose his pains, and rue of that choice. I had always (as I said often to you) a great love to dear Mr. JOHN BROWN; because I thought I saw Christ in him more than in his brethren: Fain would I write to him to stand by my sweet Master; and I wish you would let him read my letter, and the joy I have if he will appear for and side with my LORD JESUS." This letter is dated in the year 1637, about which time 'tis probable the Author had been setting forward for the ministry. He was settled at Wamphray a good number of years before his banishment, as appears by the dates he puts to his sermons, a large collection whereof, and several other practical treatises, are yet unpublished; that the church should be deprived of any part of the labours of this eminent divine, is surely a very great pity.

If a more particular account of the life, sufferings and death of this great man, than what can be got, was here inserted, it would be certainly valuable and useful; but seeing that during the latter part of his life, for his singular zeal and faithfulness to his Lord and Master, he was banished to Holland 1662 †, till about 1679, when he died

* If thou be not a stranger in our Israel, whoever thou be, then if either eminency in grace or learning, if vastness or pregnancy of parts, if fervour of zeal according to knowledge, if unwearied diligence in the work of the Lord, (wherein he laboured more abundantly than any of us all, for no man in the church of Scotland hath filled up his measure, even as to that; nor know, nor see I a man who is like to do it, nay, who is in capacity for it) if a holy heroic misregard of men, and their estimation, in approving himself to God, by a ready and resolute withstanding the corruptions of his time, and opposing all these courses and contrivances, and these unworthy connivings, whereby the cause hath been prejudged, yea basely abandoned, and the free course and progress of the gospel obstructed; if single sollicitousness, and strenuous endeavours how to have pure ordinances preserved in this generation, and propagate to the posterity; in a word, if faithfulness as a servant in all the house and matters of his God, even that God, who counted him faithful, and put him in the ministry, and loyalty to his princely Lord and Master, (the prerogatives of whose crown, the privileges of whose kingdom and the establishment of whose throne, were more prized by him, more precious and dear unto him, than all other interests whatsoever; nay, he was so far from regarding any other interest, in respect of that alone valuable one, that as he was never daunted from a plain peremptoriness in owning thereof, by the dread of poor mortals, or the fear of what the stated enemy could do unto him; so he was never demurred into a forbearance, or brow-beaten into a base and un-ambassador becoming silence, by the displeasure and discountenancings, even of such of his brethren, whom otherwise he loved and highly honoured, as to a plain contending with them, wherein he perceived them not to walk uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, and to the former principles of that church, while she retained first love, and did first works; yea, he judged it duty (and in this he had the mind of Christ) to contend earnestly with them, for their not earnest contentings for the faith, tho' for this he should have been condemned, and accounted, as he was, a man of contention:) I say, if thou be such an one to whom such a blessed conjunction of rare gifts, with such a rich and plentiful measure of grace, can endear any man; I then nothing doubt, but Mr. BROWN, great and gracious Mr. BROWN, hath such a place in thy soul, and such a preference to others, as thou wilt judge it superfluous in me to say any thing to commend what the truly great Elijah of his time, (I mean of this present time, when having served his generation according to the will of God, he fell asleep) the man jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, above all his brethren whom he hath left behind him, I except not one soul.

Mr Ward's Preface to the Swan-Song.

† On the 6th day of November 1662, the learned, zealous and pious Mr. JOHN BROWN minister at Wamphray, was ordered to be imprisoned for speaking against those who countenanced the diocesan assembly's. Great were the hardships he underwent in prison, for he was denied even the necessaries of life; and tho', because of the ill treatment he met with, he was brought almost to the gates of death, yet he could not have the benefit of the free air, until he signed a bond obliging himself to a voluntary banishment without cause. *Crookshank's Hist.* vol. I. P. 134.

died of a lingering disease, few particular circumstances concerning him have been transmitted to the place of his nativity. The cruel rage of his enemies could not be satisfied in going this length only with him, but the infamous Sharp was so mad against him and Mr. M^r Ward, that he prevailed with the King to write to the States of Holland, to have them removed out of their provinces, but the States being convinced of the unreasonableness of such a demand, refused to comply with it.

The particular grounds and causes why he was thus inhumanly and barbarously treated, was his strict attachment to, and maintaining the binding force and perpetual obligations of the nations solemn vows and covenants; his refusing acceptance of the then sinful Indulgences; his publicly and strenuously testifying against the sacrilegious usurpation of the regal and incommunicable headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in and over his church; his public and zealous testifying against licentious tolerations, and the many other abounding wickednesses and defections that prevailed (and which alas! continues and are come to a prodigious height) for these and such like, was he violently thrust from his flock: yet the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence is very remarkable, in that whilst his enemies meant it for evil to him, God meant it for good; tho', like Joseph, sold by unnatural brethren, yet was he sent to preserve life and comfort among his poor afflicted and persecuted brethren in Scotland, exposed to the blood-thirsty rage and cruelty of their wicked, ungodly and apostate rulers: He wrote and sent over to Scotland many useful and consolatory treatises, wherein he discovers the true state of the testimony of the church of Scotland, especially his remarkably eminent piece entitled *The Life of Faith in the time of trouble*, and *Swan-Song*, and a number of others, some of which the circumstances of the times would not suffer his name to be prefixed.

His singular judiciousness and honesty, in being a faithful witness and wrestler for the purity of Reformation, appears very obvious in his piece entitled *An Apologetical Relation*, wherein he holds forth the dreadful and hainous nature of national perjury and covenant-breaking, and convincingly discovers that it is not in the power of the nations to shake themselves loose of their sacred obligations, either as to the matter or manner of them; tho' to the great shame and unspeakable loss of these nations, the bulk and body of them have not only once or twice discovered their contempt of these sacred vows to the Most High, but have still persisted and continued in an open course of backsliding upwards of these hundred years past*.

II. The next thing shall be very summarily to notice the scope of the inspired epistle, and the exposition: It is very observable that the method of this epistle is, first doctrinal, and then practical, which however distinct in themselves, must never be separated; It is said, *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee*, Psal. ix. 10. and, *If any man do his will, he shall know the doctrine*, John vii. 29. In this epistle the profound and deep mysteries and foundation principles of the gospel are laid open, such as the imputation of the First Adam's sin to his posterity; the imputation of the Second Adam's righteousness to all his spiritual seed and off-spring, whereby their persons are accepted and sins pardoned; the doctrine of the adorable Trinity of persons and unity of essence; the mysterious constitution of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ; the doctrine of predestination; the union of believers with Christ; perseverance, sanctification, and glorification. This inspired writer lays the foundation of acceptance and salvation,

not

† See the resolution of the States, inserted in Wodrow's Hist. vol. I. P. 434. 435.

* See *Apologetical Relation*, pages 328, 343. *Hist. of the Indulgence*, page 132.

not upon the dim light of the Gentiles law of nature, neither on the Jews works of the law, but solely and wholly upon the perfect righteousness, obedience and satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ, *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*, Rom. iii. 24. Justification by faith without the works of the law, and the admission of the Gentiles, were the chief things the Jews stumbled at, which the inspired writer clears and vindicates from their gross and carnal notions. After having laid down a sure and stable foundation for practice, he finishes his epistle with necessary exhortations for Christians how to regulate their conversation, either considered as members of civil or ecclesiastical society. This epistle by some has been called *The Christian's Practical Catechism*. Others have said of the psalms and Paul's epistles, that they were stars of the first magnitude and differ from the other stars in glory. It is said of Chrysostom that he would have this epistle to the Romans read over to him twice a week. It will readily be granted that the deep and profound mysteries therein contained, render it a subject very unmeet for ordinary or weak illiterate expositors to comment upon: What the inspired apostle Peter says, may be applied to this epistle, *In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction*, 2 Pet. iii. 16. It is likewise observable, that this epistle is put before the rest, not on account of its being priorly wrote, but by reason of the great and weighty subjects it contains, and the dignity of the place whereto it is directed.

Our Expositor appears, either for method, matter, or stile, very much a-piece with other Scots divines who commented on the scriptures, in his time; such as Durham, Dickson, Ferguson, Hutcheson, Nisbet, and others. He first very summarily shows the connexion and general scope of the text, then more fully deduces observations, natively arising from, and contained in the words; wherein the true sense and meaning of the text comes to be discovered. Nice critics, no doubt, will find fault with the simplicity and plainness of speech that the author uses, and because they will not find in this exposition, their favourable and presently fashionable embellishment, of what they call fine language; but it is presumed their censure will be very little regarded, as the language and composition, method and matter, to sober readers, will be found both clear, comprehensive, and orthodox; and excellently calculate for differencing the law and the gospel, and for detecting and confuting Arminian, Socinian, and Antinomian doctrine.

III. We shall now point out some of the grounds and reasons that seem to give occasion for this publication.

1. From what has been noticed above, concerning this place of sacred writing, it appears, that such an exposition as the following, at this time, is very necessary, as none hitherto, in such a full and practical way, on this epistle, has been offered to the public. We have indeed the expositions of some of the author's venerable contemporaries, such as were just now mentioned, upon other places of sacred writing, but none of them on this place, except Mr. Dickson, in a very short way of paraphrase. Mr. Henry died when he advanced this length in the New Testament, and it is generally acknowledged his Continuators are considerably inferior to himself.

2. At a time when so many false teachers, and false doctrines anent justification and justifying faith, prevail and abound to such a great height, there seems to be a necessary and particular call in providence, for both publishing and perusing scriptural and orthodox expositions, both for information and confirmation of the church and people of God, when so imminently exposed to hurt and injury, *by the slight and cunning craftiness*

lines of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, by their good words and fair speeches, the hearts of the simple.

3. When the beautiful hedge of the government and discipline of the church is broken down and torn, so that the foulest principles and doctrines get leave to take place, and are entertained by such as should be as he-goats before the flock, there is surely a loud call for every one who regard the welfare and salvation of their immortal souls, to take heed of what doctrines and spirits they receive, and try whether or not they be of God; as it is foretold by the Holy Ghost, that false teachers shall come in among the people, *who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction;—and many shall follow after their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of,* 2 Pet. ii. 1. 2. When the generality and bulk of a nation are left to poison their souls in eating and drinking what their shepherds have trodden and defiled with their feet, it is surely a called-for season to entertain wholesome truth and doctrine, such as has been already drunk in by the church for her real health and comfort. It is the counsel of the good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep, *If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,* Song i. 8. He tells us likewise, *That no man also having drunk old wine will straightway desire new: for he saith, The old is better,* Luke v. 39.

4. May it not be allowed a proper and necessary season for publishing and perusing the orthodox expositions and labours of those who have acted such a noble part, for maintaining the purity of the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of Christ's church, as to subject themselves to the trial of cruel mockings, bonds, and imprisonments, rather than betray the cause and interest of their Lord and Master; when the sad marks of divine anger and wrath are gone forth against our guilty lands, where some who bear the name of Presbyterian ministers, go the dreadful length of flatly denying the binding obligation of our national, solemn, sacred Covenants, and bonds of allegiance to the Most High; and scurrilously give out to the world, that our honoured reformers and martyrs for truth, in their framing and favouring these Covenants, were moved more with political and mercenary views therein, than the honour and glory of the church's Head and Lord. How sad an appearance is it, that such are so keenly disposed to have Christ in his truths and members crucified, that they are crying, *Away with him; we will not have this man to reign over us.* By sober thinking persons, our Covenants have been sustained as the antient land-marks which our fathers have set, and which were made the perpetual basis of our national constitution and government, which none may dare or presume to lift, alter, or model at their pleasure, but at the expence of the dreadful anathema entailed on all such. When once the bulwarks of a church and nation's constitution come to be removed, what a prey will they soon be for every destroying enemy to enter thereinto, and spoil and waste at their pleasure.

Ever since the decline of our national reformation, a set of pulpit men have arisen, who set themselves in direct opposition to the gospel and doctrine of Christ: instead of knowing nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, they appear determined to know and teach some other thing of their own framing and invention; rarely do they mention the name of Christ in their pulpit harangues, as if they were ashamed of this glorious name; or when they mention him, it is only under the notion of a heavenly teacher and pattern of imitation, robbing him of the glory of his Deity and Godhead, and the merit of his obedience and righteousness; and thereby do they frame a gospel of their own fancy, intirely everfive of the gospel of the grace of God; not regarding the

the terrible anathema; *That if we, or, an angel from heaven, should preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.*

Morality in its finest dress, and true godliness in its greatest simplicity, do widely differ, both as to their spring and tendency; the one is bred in, and fomented by a carnal proud heart, the other flowing from a new-covenant state of union to, and interest in Christ; the one tending to exalt self, whilst the other ascribes all to God, and the sovereignty of his grace.

The tendency of an evangelic and legal spirit and principle, will be found likewise vastly different: The true, filial, and heaven-born principle, will be for obtaining heaven and salvation in no other way, or upon any other terms, than the gospel proposes, which is *without money or price*; whereas the nature of a legal spirit will be for terms of its own, and for happiness without holiness; for resting on attainments and duties for its favours, and for mincing and modelling the covenant of grace into the old covenant of works; whilst the native tendency and language of a gracious principle will be, *Let me have Christ, else I die. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, &c.* Philip. iii. 8. 9.

It may be justly lamented, that few know the meaning of true religion in its power and efficacy upon the heart, the generality being either carried down in a deluge of defection, inconsideration, and ignorance of a God in Christ; or else driven to wild heights, extravagancies, and headstrong rigidity, busy in kindling and fomenting strife and division in the church; yet all the true lovers of Christ and his truths, may depend on the promise of him who is faithful, that they shall be kept safely, and when ready to be ensnared on the right hand or on the left, they shall hear a voice behind them, saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it.*

Judicious expositions of the holy scriptures have been reckoned the church's great treasure, and, when accompanied with the divine blessing, are a happy mean for understanding the mind and will of God revealed. May the perusal of the following Lectures be accompanied with a remarkable blessing, for the glory of God, and the benefit of immortal souls; and may the great Lord of the harvest send forth more faithful labourers, and preserve a seed in the ministry, and out of it, that, from time to time, shall be reckoned to him for a generation: To whom be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. *Amen.*

E X P O S I T I O N

O F T H E

E P I S T L E to the R O M A N S.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

THE general scope and design of the first seven chapters of this epistle, is to prove, that we are justified before God, only by the righteousness of Christ received by faith. We continue in a justified state, by the renewed exercise of faith; and the whole life of a justified person is a life of faith in the Son of God, as well as his whole hope of eternal life is through faith in Christ.—This doctrine is proved, by a representation of the atrocious impiety and wickedness of the whole Gentile world; that even they who make the highest pretences to innocence, and who judge and censure others for such horrid impieties, as are commonly practised among them, are all inexcusable and self-condemned, on account of the wickedness perpetrated and indulged by themselves; being all of them such violators of the law and light of nature, as will leave them *without excuse in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*—This is plainly the Apostle's argument, from the 18th verse of the first chapter to the 17th verse of the second chapter. Whence it follows, that the Gentile world cannot possibly have any claim to justification by their own personal obedience; nor any other way, but by the righteousness of Christ received by faith.

The Apostle next proceeds to shew, that the Jew has no better plea to make for his acceptance with God, on account of his own personal righteousness than the Gentile, tho'

he rests in the law, and makes his boast of God, knows his will, and approves the things that are most excellent. For he also, in his highest natural attainments, breaks the law, dishonours God, and at the best performs but an external obedience, and reaches not to the spirituality which the law requires.—The Jew has indeed *much every way* the advantage, in point of external privileges; but in point of justifying righteousness he cannot be said to be better than the Gentiles; *no, in no wise!*—This is the argument from the 17th verse of the second, to the 9th verse of the third chapter: in which verse and those following, the Apostle sums up the argument, in these remarkable words, which fully justify my interpretation of his scope and design: *For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one, &c.*—That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.—From these premises, he draws this conclusion in the 20th verse of the third chapter, &c. *Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference. Being justified freely by his grace, through*

the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.--- Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. --- Which was the point to be proved.

But here may arise a question: What law is it that the apostle excludes from having any hand in our justification? to which it is answered: all the law, that was obligatory both upon Jews and Gentiles; for they were both obnoxious to wrath, by their violation of the respective laws they were under; had all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. ---And God deals with them all alike. He will justify them all by their faith in Jesus Christ, and no otherways; and thereby shew that *he is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also.*

Having thus concluded his first argument, and proved from the guilt and impotence both of Jew and Gentile, that no man can be justified by the law of nature, by the law which was given to the Jews, nor any other way but by *the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ.*---The Apostle proceeds to prove the same thing from Abraham's *faith being imputed to him for righteousness*; and from David's *describing the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works*, throughout the fourth chapter.

He then begins the fifth chapter, by describing the glorious privileges of those, who are thus *justified by faith*, and ends it by shewing in what manner we partake of the righteousness of Christ for our justification: That it is in the same manner, as we are partakers of the sin and guilt of Adam, to

our condemnation.---As Adam's sin was imputed to all whom he represented, unto their condemnation, so the righteousness of Christ is imputed to all whom he represented, and who believe in him, *unto justification of life. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous.*

After a solemn caution unto all, not to turn the grace of God into wantonness, and not to *continue in sin, that grace may abound*; and after enforcing this caution from the obligation we are under by our baptism to *die unto sin, and walk in newness of life, as Christ died for us, and rose again from the dead*, (as in the first part of the sixth chapter) the Apostle goes on to shew (in the latter part of that chapter) what was the privileged happy state of these Romans, to whom he wrote: That *sin had not dominion over them; for they were not under the law, but under grace: That they were made free from sin, and were become the servants of righteousness.*---And then throughout the whole seventh chapter, and the beginning of the eighth, he illustrates this matter, and shews in what respect they are *not under the law*, and how, or in what respects, they are *made free from sin.*

Thus the scope and design of the Apostle in the first seven chapters of this epistle, is, to prove, that both Jew and Gentile must be justified only by the righteousness of Christ, received by faith; and not by their own observance of any law, which they are under,

ROMANS,

R O M A N S, C H A P. I.

VERSE I. *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.*

IN this verse, and some verses following, is contained the description of the author of this epistle, which is one part of the inscription thereof, and that both in general, and in particular; and therein is contained many forcible arguments, to induce the Romans to yield obedience, and to give credit unto his doctrine. 1. The first is this: I am not ashamed to avow that which I tell you to be truth; I dare take my hazard in the maintenance of the truth of that which I aver to be truth to you; and therefore I subscribe my name to this epistle, *Paul*. 2. You would do well to take this doctrine off my hand, for in writing this to you, I am not seeking myself, nor going about any particular of mine own, for I am *a servant*, that hath a Master above me, whose work I am about, and to whom I must give an account of my behaviour in this charge. 3. My Master is no mean man; my Master is Jesus Christ, one who hath manifested his love to poor man, in taking on him his titles and offices, and one whom you profess to love and respect, I am a servant of *Jesus Christ*. 4. Do not think that I am running unsent, and that I have not a special warrant for this I do, for I am called and sent, I am commissioned for this cause, *called*. 5. I am not one of the meaner sort of Christ's servants, nor one placed in the lowest degree, but *an apostle*; such an one as am called immediately of God, and extraordinarily qualified for the work, and assisted in going about, and in confirming the same. 6. My call is not a bare pretence, or groundless, or uncertain, but a call verified and made out in God's own way: I am not only called, but *separated*, and solemnly set apart for that end, as having no other thing to do, but to

hold forth the gospel of God; and therefore seeing the Lord hath set me and others apart for this only work, as our talk, you will not do well to reject our counsel. 7. The message which I have to deliver is good news, *viz.* touching the sole way of being justified before God. The work *unto* which I am set apart and designed, is *the gospel*; I am separated to hold forth that. I have nothing to hold forth but good news; therefore it is your best to take heed, and to obey what I say. 8. These good news are not news of my own invention; this gospel which I preach, and am to declare to you, is not mine principally, it is the gospel of God, and therefore reject it not.

DOCTRINAL OBSERVATIONS:

I. The love and grace of God is admirably free and powerful, that can make of a cruel merciless persecutor, a faithful and powerful preacher of the gospel; for here Paul, who sometime made *havock of the church*, Acts viii. 3. and *breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord*, Acts ix. 1. 2. is now become a preacher of righteousness, and a minister of the gospel.

II. Howbeit the servants of the Lord may sometimes conceal their names, when they know that for their cause the doctrine would be taken in worse part, and less regarded (for which cause it is very likely the apostle concealed his name in writing to the Hebrews, among whom he knew his name was not savoury) yet when the truth is not in danger of suffering that way, it were good for the ministers of the gospel, to be so persuaded of the truth of what they teach, as not to refuse a testimony thereunto, when needful, nor to be ashamed to profess the same.

and to be so honest and ingenuous as to avow themselves ready to maintain the same, seeing for these causes the apostle subscribes his name here. and calls himself Paul.

III. As people see the messengers of the Lord so far persuaded of the truth of what they deliver as not to flinch from giving testimony thereunto when expedient, nor afraid to avow and maintain the same when called to it, they should so much the more heartily welcome and kindly entertain the same; for this may be looked on as an argument to move the Romans to embrace what he was to speak, because he was neither ashamed nor afraid to put his name to it and subscribe it.

IV. Ministers are servants, and that upon a fivefold account; 1. Because their work is painful and laborious, and hence oftentimes called a labour, 1 Thess. iii. 5. --- *Left by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.* 1 Thess. v. 12. *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.* 1 Tim. v. 17. *Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.* 1 Cor. xv. 10. --- *But I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* 2. Because they must not seek themselves, nor their own good, in the discharge of their duty, but the good and advantage of their Master. 2 Cor. iv. 5. *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus's sake.* 3. Because they should be careful they preach or publish nothing, but what they have a warrant for. 4. Because as they must walk, in their deportment in the work of the ministry, according to their commission; so they must give an account of their carriage in that employment unto their master, Luke xvi. 2. --- *Give an account of thy stewardship.* 5. Because, however the Lord hath clothed his servants with power and authority over the flock, 1 Cor. iv. 21. hence they are said to be set over, 1 Thess. v. 12. and to have rule, 1 Heb. xiii. 7. 17. yet they are not to lord it

over God's heritage, 1 Pet. v. 3. but so to demean themselves, as having a master above their heads, whose rules and precepts they ought to follow and walk by.

V. Seeing the ministers of the gospel, in preaching the same, are about their master's business, and not their own; and must be painful and faithful in the discharge of their duty, as they will be answerable; it is the duty of people, to take well off their hands what they say, and welcome every truth they bring forth; for Paul useth this as a motive to move them to a hearty embracing of what he was to say, that he was but a servant.

VI. Notwithstanding that the work of the ministry be painful and laborious, and the ministers themselves exposed to many injuries and contempt in a world, yet this should counterballance all, and prove a sufficient encouragement, that they are servants to a good and gracious Jesus; and so to one that will undoubtedly reward them, and to a Christ, one highly honoured and advanced to be a priest, prophet, and a king; and so to one by whom they will get no small credit and honour.

VII. Humbled sinners, as they have mean and low thoughts of themselves, so they think much of any relation they have to Christ, how feckless soever it seem to be; and therefore Paul subscribes himself a servant of Jesus Christ, as being all the title of honour he valued and desired.

VIII. Whoever they be that profess faith in Jesus Christ, they should heartily and willingly embrace any message he sendeth to them by whatsoever hands; and therefore to persuade those Romans whose faith was spoken of far and near, to receive kindly and cheerfully the doctrine he was to deliver, he useth this as a motive, that he was a servant of Jesus Christ, whom they professed to respect and love, and it was his message he was about.

IX. However it be a duty lying upon every Christian to help others to Christ according to their power, within their own sphere,

sphere, and in a private way, yet none ought to intrude themselves into the office of the ministry, and take upon themselves the public, ordinary, and authoritative way of preaching the gospel of Christ, as his ambassadors, unless they be called thereunto, as was Aaron, for Paul was now called to be an apostle.

X. As people are to try the doctrine delivered, whether it be according to the law and testimony, or not; so they should see that he whom they receive as a messenger of the Lord, be duly and orderly called thereunto; and not to hearken to every one without trial, whether he be sent or not: for Paul here tells them he was called, it being a thing he knew concerned them to know.

XI. Though truth should be embraced and believed as truth, yet it should be received and welcomed so much the more that it is delivered by such as are commissioned and called thereunto; and as the neglecting of truth, delivered by such, will be so much more a guilt, so the knowing of the messenger to be one authorised for that effect, should be a motive to people to welcome more heartily truths proposed; for this may be looked on as an argument and motive to move them to receive his doctrine, that he was a called apostle.

XII. As a minister's clearness in the matter of his call, will do much to support him and bear up his spirit in that day when his call shall be questioned, as Amos vii. 14. 15. *Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet; neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycomore-fruit. And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go prophesy unto my people Israel; and he shall meet with opposition as Jeremiah did, Jer. xvii. 15. Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the Lord? let it come now: So it is incumbent to all such to labour for so much clearness in his call, as he may avow the same, when the good of the gospel calls for it, as here Paul avows he was called to be an apostle.*

XIII. It pleased the Lord, at the first founding of gospel churches, to set up some officers for a time, whereof the office of apostleship was one, and the highest, and these had special privileges that officers now have not, as, 1. They were immediately called of Christ, John xx. 21. *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* Mat. xxviii. 20. viz. either *viva voce*, or extraordinary determination from heaven, as it was in the case of Matthias, Acts i. 26. *And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.* 2. They were inspired of the Holy Spirit, John xvi. 13. *Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, and so infallible in holding forth the doctrine of the gospel.* 3. They had the gift of miracles working, for further confirmation of their doctrine. 4. And were not tied to any certain place, but had the broad world for their charge, Matth. xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

XIV. Albeit that high office of apostleship be now ceased, and ministers cannot persuade or move people to hear them, from this, that they are extraordinary ministers, immediately called by Christ Jesus; yet they may in some sense be called apostles, as ambassadors sent and commissioned; for the word in general signifies any ambassador or messenger, John xiii. 6. *The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him.* Phil. ii. 25. *Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants; and upon this score their words should have weight, and be heartily received. And however, it will not a little aggravate the guilt of such as hear the gospel, and receive it not heartily, that it was delivered first by such eminent, extraordinary, and immediately called and inspired messengers, and that*

the gospel preached by faithful servants of Christ, is no way dissonant from, but every way conform unto the doctrine delivered by such eminent and infallible officers; for that his doctrine may have weight with these Romans, he lets them know that he is an *apostle*, an eminent and infallible officer, raised up extraordinarily, and called immediately.

XV. As it is commendable for the servants of Jesus Christ, not to be so lavish of their office and authority, but in all christian sobriety to speak sparingly of the same, when no necessity argeth, least thereby they occasion contempt and become vain; so, it is no less dangerous, upon the other hand, to conceal the same, when there is a fair door opened, and a call given thereunto, when the good of the gospel requireth the same. As here Paul (who several times writing to other churches, as to the Philippians and Thessalonians, as also when writing to Philemon, did forbear to stile himself *apostle*) subscribes himself so, knowing that it might do no harm, but rather encourage these Romans so much the more chearfully to welcome his doctrine, and give credit to the same.

XVI. In a constituted church, it is not enough for such as take upon them to preach the gospel, to pretend a call, but they must also be solemnly set apart and ordained and separated to that work; for here the apostle says, he was not only called, but separated also, *viz.* by prayer, fasting and imposition of hands, as you see, Acts xiii. 2. 3. 4. And though it cannot be particularly instanced in the rest of the apostles, how they were thus set apart, nor denied, that before that time, when he and Barnabas were set apart at the Lord's special command, he preached the gospel, yet certain it is, the Lord would never have desired that those should be solemnly set apart by prayer and laying on of hands, if not to shew us what is the rule we ought to follow; and to shew that it is his will, that this way should be followed in all time coming.

XVII. Such is the weakness and unfitness of frail men, who are but *earthen vessels*, 2 Cor. iv. 7. and of such weight is the glorious embassage of the gospel, that whoever is employed thereabout should give himself wholly thereunto, 2 Tim. ii. 4. *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.* Acts vi. 4. *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.* The work is of such importance, that it will take up the whole man. And seeing it is so, it is the duty of all ministers of the gospel, so to walk in that calling, and so to demean themselves in every piece of their deportment in that office, as men separated and set apart for that employment solely; for Paul says he was set apart and *separated* from other employments to that only. And the consideration of this, that the Lord, in his eternal purpose, set them apart for that employment, should stir them up to diligence therein, and to a walking answerably thereunto; for Paul was *separated from his mother's womb*, as you see, Gal. i. 15.

XVIII. It will be so far from excusing the wicked, that such as carried the gospel to them, had no other thing to do, that upon the contrary it will tend to aggravate their guilt, that the Lord sent men to them for that end, only to preach the gospel to them, giving them a command to wait upon that employment, and do nothing else: And because it is so, serious thoughts of this, that the Lord hath given special command to such as might many ways win their living in a world, and follow a more gainful (as to worldly gain) and peaceable trade, than that is of preaching the gospel, to preach the gospel, and to attend upon that very thing, should move people to be convinced of the Lord's loving kindness, willingness to welcome sinners; of a reality of the gospel tendered, and of their duty to welcome the offer, and hearken to the gospel; for Paul useth this as a motive to induce them to believe and obey what he was to deliver, that

he was one that was separated to that employment, and might meddle with no other.

XIX. As the gospel contains nothing but the gladdest tidings, and sweetest news that ever was heard tell of, so people should be so far from taking occasion hence to wax wanton, and lull themselves asleep in security, and take their will of the flesh and the world, that so much the more rather should they stir up themselves to welcome heartily and to embrace with all acceptation the offer of Christ in the gospel; and therefore Paul says, it is the gospel or good news he is about to declare, and therefore they should make it welcome.

XX. The gospel we preach, is ~~new~~ news of our own invention, ~~but it is the~~ invention and plot of the ~~wise~~ wise God; and because ~~it is not ours~~, nor are we the authors thereof, but God only, who found out this way of saving poor lost man, out of the depth of his infinite wisdom, which neither man nor angels would ever have fallen upon; therefore it were wisdom for people to take heed how they slight and undervalue so great salvation, having such a one for its author: for Paul would have them careful not to slight what he was to say, because it was not news that had their rise in his own brain, but the *gospel of God*, who will not take it well to have his gospel slighted.

VERSE 2. (*Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures*)

HERE the apostle goes on to move the Romans to embrace his doctrine, because of its worth and excellency, and therefore he steps aside to the commendation thereof in this and in the following verses. The arguments here contained for to press these people to welcome his doctrine, may be these, 1. The gospel which I am separated unto, and which I am to preach to you; is no new device, it is no new doctrine which was never heard of before; it is the same that the people of God of old had revealed by the prophets. 2. It was a matter

promised, and so should be heartily welcomed, for all his promises should be gladly received when fulfilled, and so should this promise of the gospel, which he hath fore-promised by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

Hence learn,

I. The people of God were saved by the same gospel under the Old Testament, that we under the New Testament are saved by; after one and the same way did the Lord bring his elect to glory then, and now, viz. by faith in Jesus Christ, Heb. xi. 2. Acts xv. 11. for ~~here~~ the same gospel that Paul was to ~~teach~~, was that which was promised by the Lord under the law: See Gal. iii. 8. 9.

II. However the gospel be the same for substance under the Old and New Testament, yet it seemed good in the Lord's eyes who divers ways and manners reveals himself, Heb. i. 2. to give to those under the law, a star light, or moon light only, and reserve the sunshine and noontide to us under the gospel, for they had the gospel only under promise; for *the sufferings of Christ and the glory that now is revealed* was but then prophesied of, 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. See Gal. iii. 23. and iv. 1. 2. 3. 4.

III. As people are to try the spirits whether they be of God or not, 1 John iv. 1. and to search the scriptures to see, whether the doctrine delivered be dissonant or consonant; so the messengers of the Lord should be careful they bring forth and broach no doctrine but what is warranted by the word; for Paul says, the doctrine he was broaching, was the same that was promised by the prophets, and so consonant to their doctrine, and no groundless fancy of his own head.

IV. It will not a little tend to aggravate the misbelief of people now a-days, that the gospel that is held forth and preached to them, is no new invention of man, but the same that hath been those many thousand years, as the way by which many thousands have entered into glory, and so

a proven and tried way by the experience of many, and a way attested unto by the faithful servants of the Lord in all ages, patriarchs and prophets; for it is the gospel that was promised long since by the prophets of the Lord, and for this cause he would have it welcomed.

V. It will abundantly stop our mouths, and take all excuse from us that obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, that not only it is the same in substance with that, by which all under the Old Testament were carried safe to heaven, but also, that it is now no more veiled under types, ceremonies, and promises, but clearly revealed and explained. And upon this score we should be moved to welcome heartily the gospel, because it is now plain and perspicuous; and Christ now manifested in the flesh is no more wrapped up as formerly; for so would Paul hence move them to a welcoming of his doctrine, that it was of old but promised, and now more clearly exhibited.

VI. As all the promises of the Lord should be precious in our eyes, and their performances most heartily accepted, and willingly embraced; so in particular should the gospel and the offer of a crucified Christ and Saviour be imbraced with all acceptance; and it will tend to aggravate our guilt, if we neglect so great salvation, which the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, and when unto them it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto us, 1 Pet. i. 10, 12. and therefore Paul makes use of this as an argument, that the thing he was about to do, was the fulfilling of a promise made of old by the Lord.

VII. The writings of the prophets of old, are so far from being laid aside now, as useless to us under the gospel, that they are to be acknowledged and looked on as the rule whereby to try which is the true gospel, and which not: the law and the prophets is to be a touch-stone whereby to try

what is to be believed as gospel, and what not; for Paul here affirms, that the gospel he was set apart unto, and was about to preach, was conform to the writings of the prophets, and nothing else but what they prophesied of in their writings, and the Lord promised by them in the Holy Scriptures.

VIII. However the messengers of the Lord be little regarded or respected in their generations, and their message slighted and undervalued, yet the Lord will own them as his, and it will add to our guilt to reject what they deliver; and the gospel should so much the more be welcomed by us, that it is attested unto as truth, by such as the Lord owns as his prophets.

IX. Such is God's goodness to poor man, that he will not only provide a way how they shall be saved, but will make that way known unto them, and therefore he will send prophets, to deliver it *viva voce*, and not only so, but when they should cease, he will provide a more sure word of prophecy, 2 Pet. i. 19. and cause the same be written that it might continue on record, and be studied by all, and come to every one's hands, that none may pretend ignorance; and hence surely, misbelief will be so much the more a heinous sin, that it is committed after the Lord hath taken all that pains to assure us of, and clear unto us the only way to happiness; for here we see the gospel was promised by the prophets, and then set down for the good of posterity in the holy Scriptures.

X. The Scriptures are holy, as having a holy God for their author, and breathing out nothing but holiness; and containing a perfect rule how we should walk in all holiness, and therefore should be looked on and used in all holy reverence; and therefore he calls them the *Holy Scriptures*, and also were written by holy men of God, moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21.

VERSES 3. 4. *Concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, which was made of the ſeed of David, according to the fleſh, And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the ſpirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead.*

HERE is contained another new argument, to preſs them to a willing acceptance of his doctrine, as a further commendation of the goſpel, from its ſubject-matter, or that whereof it treateth; which may be thus conceived: 1. The ſubject-matter of this goſpel, which I have gotten a commiſſion to preach to you, and others, is the promiſed Meſſias, *the Son of God.* 2. *Jeſus*, a Saviour. 3. *Chriſt*, an anointed one, as Prieſt, Prophet, and King. 4. *And our Lord*, one in whom you have, or pretend to have intereſt. 5. Who was man, and *made* man in an extraordinary manner: and as man come of *the ſeed of David.* 6. And who, notwithstanding whereof, was true God, being *in power, and declared ſo to be*, by raiſing up of himſelf from *the dead* the third day. So that every word almoſt may be looked on as a diſtinct argument to preſs their cheerful attention. In this ſummed-up argument, we have the ſum of the goſpel; even whole Chriſt, and nothing but Chriſt; and Chriſt held forth under his titles, offices, and natures. His titles are, *Son of God, Jeſus, Chriſt, Lord*; his offices are couched up under his titles; his natures are two, and theſe are clearly held forth: For, 1^{ſt}, His human nature is here, 1. called *ſleſh*: and 2. he is ſaid to be *made of the ſeed of David.* 2^{dly}, His divine nature is here held forth, 1. Under the title of the *Son of God.* 2. Under that other, *the ſpirit of holineſs*, or the ſpirit that ſanctified his human nature. 3. *And declared* by his raiſing of his human nature when dead.

DOCTRINAL OBSERVATIONS.

I. Albeit the divine eſſence, in itſelf

conſidered, be one eſſence, without any compoſition, and a moſt ſimple and unmixt eſſence, yet is there in that eſſence ſeveral perſons, or diſverſe ways of ſubſiſtence; neither is this a buſineſs repugnant to reaſon, ſeeing the eſſence, and the manner of exiſting, are not one and the ſame, but diſtinct things; this ſubſiſtence is not one and the ſame with that individual ſubſtance whereof it is the ſubſiſtence: for here is God (*viz.* the Father) and *his Son*, diſtinct perſons, not eſſentially, or in reſpect of their eſſence, but in reſpect only of their manner of exiſtence; and yet not ſo, as that they can be ſeparated, John xiv. 10. --- *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* --- See 1 John v. 7.

II. The ſame divine eſſence which the Father hath, is communicated to the Son from eternity, wholly, in an unſpeakable and ſpiritual manner; for he being called *a Son*, muſt be begotten, and the action of begetting, in the Father, is nothing elſe, than an eternal and perſonal action, whereby he communicateth all the ſame eſſence which he hath himſelf; in a wonderful and unſpeakable manner, to his Son, and that from eternity, Prov. viii. 22. 30. Hence is he called, *The brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, Heb. i. 3.

III. Howbeit the divine eſſence be one and the ſame in all the three perſons of the Trinity, yet ſome things may be ſaid of the divine nature, conſidered as it is in one perſon, which may not be ſaid of it, conſidered as in another perſon; for it is ſaid here of the ſecond perſon, that he *was made of the ſeed of David*, which cannot be ſaid of any of the reſt. The divine nature conſidered, neither ſimply as in itſelf, nor as in either the Father, nor in the Holy Ghoſt, but as in the Son, or under that ſpecial manner of exiſtence, was incarnate, and took on our nature.

IV. It was only the ſecond perſon of the Trinity that was incarnate, and took

on our flesh; for it is said, *the Son was made of the seed of David*, and not another: Gal. iv. 4. --- *made of a woman*. see Philip. ii. 7. 8.

V. Christ Jesus our Mediator is the subject-matter of the gospel, and of all the special prophecies and promises under the law; for as the gospel containeth nothing, and holdeth forth nothing but Christ in his person, natures, and offices, so the prophecies of old were concerning *his Son Jesus Christ*, &c.

VI. It should highly commend the gospel to us, that it holdeth forth and unfoldeth Jesus Christ the Son of God, and our Lord, who is not only one excellent in himself, and worthy to be known, as being *the Son of God*, but also one whose offices concern us nearly, and therefore called *Jesus Christ our Lord*; for so it may be looked on as an argument to commend the gospel, and to move them to embrace the same, that it was a doctrine concerning *his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*.

VII. The great love that Christ hath manifested unto poor lost man, in stooping so low, and condescending so far, as to take on him our nature, and assume frail human flesh, in one person with the divine nature, should also engage us to welcome the gospel that treats of him, and holds him forth as thus letting out his bowels of love; for Paul would have those Romans welcome the gospel heartily, because it was concerning *his Son, who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh*.

VIII. As it highly commends the love of God to lost sinners, in sending his Son to be a Saviour, and a Jesus; so it should move us to welcome the salvation that cometh to us, and is wrought by such an one as the Son of God: to slight it will highly tend to the aggravation of our guilt. And as the consideration of this, that Jesus is the Son of God, and so all-sufficient, and able to help sinners, should encourage poor sinful souls to come

to him, so also the consideration of this, that he is most willing to help, seeing *Jesus*, or a Saviour, is his name; for here, he that is the Son of God is Jesus by office and name, and so a Saviour, Matth. i. 21. ready to welcome all.

IX. As it should commend Jesus to us, that he is sent, appointed, and designed of the Father, and so anointed, and the Christ, for that end and purpose, to save sinners: and as it should be a strong motive to persuade and confirm poor needy souls in the faith of acceptance and welcoming; so it will tend, on the other hand, to the heightening of their guilt that embrace not an offered Mediator; for Jesus is also called *Christ*: and unless he be looked upon and taken up as one anointed and commissioned, he cannot be rightly believed in: See Mark viii. 29. Luke ix. 20. John iv. 29. 42.

X. As it is a special privilege that believers have beyond others, that they have an interest in Christ, as theirs in a special manner; so the consideration of this, that Christ is their Lord and Commander, should mind them of the obedience which they owe: and in particular it should be a strong motive to press them unto a willing and hearty acceptance of any doctrine or news concerning him: therefore, that these Romans might welcome the gospel, he tells them, that it is concerning *our Lord*.

XI. As it is believers duty to avow their interest in Christ, so, when their heart is in a good frame, they will no sooner speak of Christ, or hear him spoken of, but as soon their souls will clasp to him. And it is a black mark when one can hear Christ commended highly, as the Son of God, and as a commissioned and authorized Saviour, and not find their affections moving towards him, and their souls clasping about his neck, and embracing him as their Lord; for here, after Paul had spoken of Christ, and called him the Son of God, and Jesus Christ,

Christ, then he adds, *our Lord*; whereby he points out his own frame, and also what they should have done when they heard Christ named, even closed with him as theirs too.

XII. Whoever will have Christ as a Saviour, must resolve upon obedience to him as their Lord Jehovah and Governor; he must be received to reign in them, and over them as their commander; for as he offers himself, not only an authorized Saviour, a *Jesus Christ*, but also a *Lord*; so should we conjoin these in our acceptance; and therefore are these here joined together, *Jesus Christ our Lord*.

XIII. Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, hath two diverse natures, as being both God and man: God, that he might fit his body for a sacrifice, and uphold it under the sad weight of God's wrath, and make his obedience and sufferings to have worth and efficacy, Heb. ix. 14. and that he might be able to bring his purchased people to eternal salvation, by enduing them with his Spirit, and subduing all their enemies: and man, that he might obey the law broken by us, Gal. iv. 4. and suffer in our nature, Heb. ii. 14. and *be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, Heb. iv. 15. for here Christ the Son of God is said to have *flesh*, that is, a human nature; and also to have the *spirit of holiness*, that is, a divine nature: See Rom. ix. 5. Heb. ix. 14. 1 Pet. iii. 18. 19. 20.

XIV. These two natures, though distinct in themselves, yet are wonderfully tied and united together, by a personal union, which is not such a conjunction as is betwixt substance and accidents, or betwixt the whole and its parts; but such as whereby the second person of the Trinity did conjoin into the unity of its own person, the human nature, wanting all peculiar subsistence in and of itself: so that the Godhead of Christ is not present with the human nature only, after

that manner, as he is present with all his creatures, or with his special peculiar saints, but this is a mutual and peculiar way of existing, whereby the *Godhead* exists, in a singular manner, even *bodily*, into the human nature, Col. ii. 9. and the human nature subsists in the divine, and hath no other subsistence but in the divine nature, and so is eternally and inseparably conjoined thereto; for the Son of God, who had a *spirit of holiness*, is said to be *made of the seed of David*; and so the human nature was brought into this union.

XV. Howbeit there were two distinct natures in Christ, yet he had but one person; such was the nature of this personal union of the two natures into one person: not as if the two natures were two parts of his person, for the divine nature cannot be any part of any thing, but had a complete subsistence of itself, and assumed the human nature into its own subsistence, Heb. ii. 16. Philip. ii. 7. for the same Son of God, who had a *spirit of holiness*, had also *flesh*; that same person, and not another, was *made of the seed of David*, &c.

XVI. Notwithstanding of this inseparable and wonderful personal union betwixt the natures, yet there is no confusion among these natures, but they remain distinct; no mixture among them, or change: the human nature was not changed into the divine, nor the divine into the human; for his human nature is still called by the name *flesh*, and his divine nature by the name of the *spirit of holiness*; to shew, that as spirit and flesh are distinct, so is his human and divine nature, and still will be.

XVII. From this real distinction it cometh to pass, that each nature reserveth their own distinct attributes, and essential actions; so that the actions or attributes, that may be spoken of, and applied to one of these natures, cannot be attributed unto the other; and what doth

essentially agree to the one, doth not agree to the other : for the divine nature was not *made of the seed of David*, but Christ was so made *as concerning the flesh*; nor was his human nature the *Son of God*, but he was that in regard of his divine nature, or *the spirit of holiness*.

XVIII. Notwithstanding of all this, by reason of this hypostatical union, that which doth properly belong to one of his natures, may be attributed to the whole person, existing in both the natures; and that not in a fictitious, but in a real manner, seeing the person comprehends both natures, most really; for here, the same person is said both to be *made of the seed of David*, and to be *declared to be the Son of God*; albeit he was made of the seed of David only according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God only according to the spirit of holiness. Hence sometimes we find, that that which can be only spoken properly of one of the natures, is attributed to the person, denominated by the other nature; as Zech. xii. 10. God is said to be *crucified*, and to redeem us with *his blood*, Acts xx. 28.

XIX. Notwithstanding of this communication of properties, whereby that which is peculiar only to one of the natures, is attributed to the whole person, God-man; yet we must rightly conceive of this, according to the several natures, or principles of such and such actions, which are spoken of the whole person: for albeit one and the same person, viz. God-man, be said both to be made of the seed of David, and to be declared to be the Son of God, yet we must conceive aright, and know, that he is the Son of God, according to the spirit of holiness, and made of the seed of David, according to the flesh: and we must follow this rule, that we may win to clearness in this matter.

XX. Christ Jesus our Lord did assume real human nature, consisting of *soul*, Matth. xxvi. 38. Mark xiv. 34. Luke xxiii. 46. and of *body*, John i. 14. Philip. ii. 7.

Rom. viii. 3. 1 John iv. 2. Heb. ii. 16. 2 Tim. iii. 16. Matth. xiv. 26. Luke xxiv. 39. Heb. x. 5. *It was man that sinned*, and justice requires, that the same nature that sinned should satisfy for sin; therefore is Christ said here to be made of the seed of David, according to the flesh.

XXI. Notwithstanding of the union betwixt the human nature and the divine, the human nature of Christ was accompanied with all these essential and accidental properties, and sinless infirmities, that are common to all men, and without sin; for he behoved to be like us in all things, except sin, that he might be a fellow-feeling High-priest, Heb. ii. 17. for his human nature is here set out to us under the name of *flesh*, not excluding the soul.

XXII. The body which Jesus Christ assumed, was not a body that came down immediately from heaven, but a human body, made of the seed of David.

XXIII. Albeit Christ was like us in all things (except sin) that agree to the human nature, as such; yet was he begotten in a singular, wonderful and extraordinary manner; not as we are, but by the Holy Ghost's overshadowing his mother, Luke i. 35. and so sanctifying a part of her flesh for that end, Gal. iv. 4. and thus is he said to be *from heaven*, 1 Cor. xv. 47. for here he is said to be made (not begotten, or conceived) of the seed of David: and hence sheweth the purity and sinlessness of his human nature.

XXIV. Christ Jesus the son of Mary is the true promised Messias; for he is said to be made of the seed of David: and this was fore-prophefied of before-hand, that there should come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, Isa. xi. 1. and so was fulfilled, Acts xiii. 23. See Acts ii. 30.

XXV. As Christ Jesus was true man, so was he also truly and verily God, as having that name often ascribed to him, which is proper to God only, viz. JEHOVAH; compare Isa. xl. 3. with John i. 23. Matth. iii. 3. and Mal. iii. 1. Isa. xlv. 22.

with

with Rom. xiv. 11. and Hof. xiii. 14. with 1 Cor. xv. 54. and having often the divine attributes ſpoken of him, Rev. i. 8. John x. 28. Iſa. xlviii. 11. Philem. 2. and having divine worſhip given him, Iſa. xlii. 8. Pſal. xciii. 7. with Heb. i. 6. for here he is ſaid to have *the ſpirit of bolineſs*, meaning his Godhead: and farther, he is called *the Son of God*, which uſeth to denote ſomething eſſential to him, and not his mere office; as may be ſeen, Acts viii. 26. John x. 37. 38. iii. 16. Rom. viii. 32. Heb. v. 8. and iii. 16.

XXVI. Jeſus Chriſt is called the Son of God, only in reſpect of his divine nature, and no ways in reſpect of his human nature, Rom. ix. 5. for here he is ſaid to be *declared the Son of God*; not in reſpect of his fleſh, but *according to the ſpirit of bolineſs*: whereby the ſpirit of the Lord would not point forth the manner how his manhood was begotten, or the way of his conception by the Holy Spirit, but ſhew forth his Godhead; as the antitheſis, or oppoſition to that which he ſaid before, *according to the fleſh*, doth abundantly clear: neither is it any new thing to ſee his Godhead ſo called, as you may ſee, Dan. ix. 29. 2 Cor. xiii. 4. 1 Pet. iii. 18.

XXVII. Chriſt was the Son of God before his reſurrection; for he was then but *declared* to be his Son: Ay, and before his conception, or being made of the ſeed of David; ſee John i. 1. 2. 3. Col. i. 16.

XXVIII. As there are moe perſons in the Godhead, and every one of theſe perſons is God, ſo every one of theſe have the attributes that are eſſential to the Godhead attributed to them; for here Chriſt the ſecond perſon of the Trinity is called, *the Son of God in power*, or the powerful Son of God, or the Son of God exiſting in power; whereby is held forth his omnipotency.

XIX. As the Father commended his love to us highly, in ſending his Son in the likeness of ſinful fleſh, to die for us, ſo doth the Son commend his unſpeakable love, in that he was content not only to aſſume fleſh, and be made of the ſeed of David, but alſo to die; for when it is ſaid that he roſe

from the dead, it is clear that he did die: and there was no leſs than a neceſſity for it.

XXX. As it behoved our cautioner to die the death, ſo his death had been little for our comfort, if he had not riſen again, as victor and conqueror, deſtroying him that had the power of death; we had not been beggared with the fruits of the power of his reſurrection; therefore we ſaid he roſe again from death.

XXXI. Chriſt Jeſus being God Almighty, did raiſe up himſelf, and put life into his dead fleſh, by his own power and virtue; for it was his own raiſing of himſelf, that was a ſufficient demonſtration of his Godhead, John x. 18. --- *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*

XXXII. Chriſt's raiſing himſelf from the dead ſhould ſufficiently convince all that he was God, and enough to ſtop the mouths of all gainsayers whaſoever; he was *declared to be the Son of God, by the reſurrection from the dead*. And let men cavil at it what they will, this ſhould ſettle our faith of this, though we had no more.

XXXIII. It was not from any thing in his human nature that his actions and ſufferings had ſuch virtue and efficacy in them, but from the Godhead allenarly, that ſanctified and fitted the manhood; and therefore his Godhead is called a *ſpirit of bolineſs*, or a ſanctifying ſpirit: Intimating, that it did ſo ſanctify his human nature, and becauſe of that, is ſo called here.

VERSE 5. *By whom we have received grace and apoſtleſhip, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.*

HAVING thus holden forth Chriſt, in his two natures and one perſon, as the ſubject-matter of the goſpel, he ſhows here, that it is from him, and none elſe, that he hath his commiſſion; as alſo, the ends of his commiſſion: and ſo in this verſe, there are ſome moe reaſons held forth, whereby to perſuade them to welcome his doctrine. As, 1. He that gave me commiſſion to preach.

preach the gospel, is Christ Jesus, who is both God and man, and one raised from the dead, and thereby declared to be the Son of God essentially. 2. The very end of my ministry is to bring you to obedience to the faith, and for this end am I sent; and therefore there is all the reason in the world that you hearken to me. 3. I am not seeking myself, nor am I coming in my own name, but for his name, and the glory thereof; and therefore you should welcome my doctrine; And, 4. My commission is not limited to one certain place; you are not excluded from my charge, but are comprehended within the same; for *all nations*, and so you, should heartily embrace my doctrine.

DOCTRINAL OBSERVATIONS.

I. It speaks out great love in Christ to poor lost man, that not only he will take on our flesh, and become like us in all things, except sin, and die for our sins, and rise again for our justification; but also will send and commissionate some with those glad news, and to hold forth the terms of the bargain, and to invite souls unto obedience to the faith; for it is *by him*, that both died and rose again, and thereby declared to be the Son of God, that Paul and the rest were sent.

II. As the consideration of this, that it is Christ, who is both God and man, and manifested to be God, by his wonderful raising of himself from the dead, who hath sent and doth commissionate ministers to go forth and to preach, should move them to diligence and faithfulness; so it should be a strong motive for people to welcome them and their message both: for thus runneth the force of the argument.

III. The end of the preached gospel and a sent ministry, is to gain souls to a willing and hearty acceptance of Christ, tendered in the gospel, upon very easy terms; for the end of this *grace and apostleship* is *obedience to the faith*; unto which faithful acceptance of the offered Mediator, all the preaching of the gospel tendeth.

IV. The office of the ministry is an office that none may meddle with of their own head, or take up at their own hand; for here this *apostleship* is a thing that is *received* by Jesus.

V. It is an act of God's free grace and love, and an undeserved favour, to be employed in the work of the ministry, however such as are employed in it, for the most part, are but vilified and undervalued; therefore, says he, *we have received grace and apostleship*, or that gracious gift of apostleship. See Eph. iii. 8.

VI. As this office of the ministry, being a gracious gift of God, doth call for humility, thankfulness and faithfulness at their hands, upon whom it is bestowed; so because it is a gracious gift, that is not bestowed on every one, but such on whom the Lord is pleased to bestow it, it should engage people both to respect such whom God hath so respected, and also to welcome what they deliver, in their discharge of that office: for he makes use of this as an argument to move them to receive his doctrine, that he delivereth it by virtue of his office, which God of his mere free grace did bestow upon him.

VII. The Lord hath not now confined the gospel, and the news of salvation, unto any one country, kingdom, or commonwealth, but hath sent it abroad to all nations, giving his servants commission to preach it to all nations, without exception, as the Lord in his providence shall dispose of them; for here he says, it is *among all nations*. Not as if all and every nation had heard the gospel in their days, but that now the servants of the Lord were no more limited to any one particular nation, but that now Jews and Gentiles, and all might hear of it.

IX. As the gospel and the news of salvation, and offers of life through Jesus Christ should be heartily welcomed, as being worthy of all acceptation in themselves; so should the same be welcomed so much the more, in that they are not stinted

limited to one certain place, but extended. And as this, being an evident demonstration of God's love, should so much the more convince us of the same, and engage us to him, so the commonness of this offered gospel, should be so far from causing us esteem the less of it, that the rather because of that, we should welcome it the more chearfully; for this may be an argument to move them to welcome the gospel, that it was the gospel that was to be preached to all nations.

X. However such who are now ordained in the office of the ministry, stand in a relation, as ministers, to the whole universal visible church, and so may exercise their office in any part thereof, yet even herein there is a difference betwixt them and the apostles; for, however ordinary ministers may do the duty of pastors in any part of the visible church, by virtue of their office, and in some respects act for the good of the whole; yet the ordinary exercise of their office is limited to some certain flock or other, which they ought to oversee and take heed unto, Acts xx. 28. but the apostles were not thus limited, but had the broad world for their charge; and so the care of all the churches lay upon them, 2 Cor. xi. 28. for they received apostleship among all nations.

XL As it lieth upon ministers to be dead to themselves in the discharge of their ministerial function, and that by virtue of their office, and to eye chiefly God's glory and honour; so the consideration of this, that the servants of the Lord should, and such as intendeth to be faithful will, deny themselves, and seek their Master's honour and advantage, should strongly move people to take pleasantly and heartily their message off their hands: for this may be taken up as a new motive, that it was for his name.

XII. As it will not a little tend to the glory of Jesus Christ, that the gospel is welcomed, and obedience is yielded to the faith; so because this willing obedience

and faith will tend to Christ's glory, it is peoples duty so much the more to follow this course, and hearken unto, obey and believe the gospel; for it may be taken as having reference to their obedience and faith, viz. that it will be for his name, or glory.

VERSE 6. *Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.*

HERE are more arguments to the same purpose: As, 1. You are among those that belong to my charge, being of those Gentiles unto whom I am sent, and therefore you should hearken diligently to what I say. 2. You ought not to cast at my doctrine, but rather welcome it with all gladness of heart, seeing it is of God's free grace that ever you heard of the gospel, who by nature are but Gentiles, and so want those privileges that the Jews boast of, as having the covenant, and the promises, belonging to them. 3. Though you were such by nature, yet now there is a change, for you are Christ's, and effectually called, at least professing so much, and so engaged to yield obedience to Christ.

DOCTRINAL OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' it be the duty of people to welcome the truths of the gospel, when delivered by one commissioned, whatever they be, yet such truths should so much the more willingly be received, when delivered by such as are in a special manner set over them in the Lord, Heb. xiii. 17. as having a special commission to them in particular, and an obligation to take heed to them, and to feed them in particular: therefore, says Paul, *among whom are ye also*; you belong to my charge, as well as others, and so should not reject my doctrine.

II. A back-look, and a fresh view of folks condition by nature, altogether undeserving of any good at God's hand, should lay strong bonds on people to hearken unto and obey him that had pity on them, and brought them forth: for, that those

Romans might with all willingness hearken unto Paul's doctrine, he puts them in mind, that they were *Gentiles* by birth, and so needed not be proud, seeing by birth they had no right to the oracles of God, and so should be glad at their heart to welcome the gospel.

III. The Lord's goodness in working a great change in us, and bringing us from darkness to light, and from the state of nature into the state of grace, should be so far from causing us wax proud, and misken ourselves, that, on the contrary, we should be thereby the more strongly drawn to obedience: therefore does he tell them, that though they were *Gentiles*, and so by nature *without Christ*, being *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and *strangers from the covenants of promise*, Eph. ii. 12. yet now they were *called of Jesus Christ*; and hereby would force obedience from them.

IV. All such as are effectually called, have a special interest in, and relation unto, Christ; for they are his who are called; he owneth them as his own; they who are called belong to him.

V. The special relation that people have to Christ, or pretend to have by their profession, should lay strong bonds on them, to walk worthy of him that hath called them from darkness to light; to welcome his message and messengers; and to yield all submissive obedience unto their Master, Jesus Christ: for he calls them *the called of Christ*; that thereby they might be wrought unto obedience.

VERSE 7. *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

HERE is the second part of the inscription of this epistle, containing the description of those unto whom the apostle did write; as also the salutation which he used. They are described, 1st, From their

place of habitation, inhabitants of *Rome*. 2^{dly}. More specially, 1. *Beloved of God*; 2. *Called*; 3. *Saints*. In the salutation there is, 1st, The good things wished for. 1. *Grace*; that is, the goodwill and favour of God: 2. *Peace*; a fruit, and an effect flowing therefrom; reconciliation with God, peace of conscience, and with others; and all other things, necessary for our well-being here or hereafter. And, 2^{dly}, The causes of these good things. 1. The principal, *God our Father*. 2. The procuring cause, *and our Lord Jesus Christ*. And herein also he presseth home his point.

DOCTRINAL OBSERVATIONS.

I. Such is God's goodness and kindness to his people, that he will not let them want a word of instruction and direction when he sees it fit, but will send it to them even from afar, ere they want it; for here he stirs up Paul, now at Corinth (as is generally supposed) a city in Greece, to write to *Rome*, a great way distant. Be where we will, God can find a way to let us know his mind when he sees fit.

II. Albeit God will do good to the seed of the righteous, and that to many generations, yet grace goes not by heirship: and the Lord's beginning a good work in any place will not tie him to keep up the candlestick there in all time coming; for *Rome*, that then was famous for saints in it, is now become the seat of the Beast. God hath not tied his gospel to any one place, but can remove it, when he sees it abused.

III. As the saints are the persons most in esteem with God, and whom he respects before princes and great ones; so should such be high in our estimation and affection: for here Paul, miskening the great, rich, and mighty citizens and courtiers writes to the poor saints among them; and it is such that are honoured with this epistle.

IV. As it is a special and prime privilege of itself, to be beloved of God; so it is that which believers ought to look upon as their garland and crown, and as a chief badge of honour: for here the prime and chief epi-
the

that which he gives them is this, that they are *beloved of God*.

V. Howbeit by Adam's transgression all mankind did forfeit their right to heaven, and became enemies to God, yet in that sinful mass, and among that lost race, there was some unto whom the Lord carried everlasting kindness, and had a room for in his electing love: for this, to be *beloved of God*, is a privilege belonging to some only, whom the Lord in due time calleth unto himself; therefore is this epithet joined with *called*, and *saints*, to shew, that this is peculiar to such only.

VI. From this eternal love of God, floweth all those special blessings which in time he communicateth; and in particular this of effectual calling. And such as are effectually called, may thence gather, that they had a room in the Lord's everlasting love; for to be *beloved of God*, and *called*, is here joined, as the cause and effect.

VII. Such as are effectually called have on them the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and are in part sanctified; and daily promoting and advancing forward in the way of holiness: for in these respects it is, that they are called *saints*, devoted to holiness. And such as are indeed effectually called, will be following after holiness, and labouring to look like saints; for therefore are *called*, and *saints*, joined together.

VIII. Howbeit all and every one that are visible professors, and federally holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. are not truly and really sanctified inwardly; yet it is our duty to look upon all such as are visible professors, as true members of the visible church; and to esteem them saints, as long as their practice doth not belye their profession: for albeit it can hardly be thought, that all these professors at Rome were really such as they professed themselves to be, yet as long as there was nothing known to the contrary, Paul calls them all *saints*, and *called* ones.

IX. It is the duty of pastors, who have the charge of souls, to be as tender of the poorest under their charge, as of the great-

est, seeing their souls may be as dear to Christ; and they are to give an account for them, as for others. Thus we are taught by Paul's example, who, without respect of persons, writes to *all the saints at Rome*; not preferring one before another.

X. A lively apprehension and consideration of God's loving-kindness to us taking effect in time, in effectually calling and renewing us, will forcibly draw us to obedience, as by a magnetic virtue. We can not rightly think of his old love, and his old love now verified and demonstrated, but our hearts must be warmed with these beams, and reflect back again. Therefore, to move them to welcome his doctrine, he puts them in mind of God's eternal love, coming to height in time, when he calls them *beloved of God*, &c.

From the SALUTATION learn;

I. That it is the duty of Christians to be real and christian in all their carriage and deportment; even in their most ordinary actions, as salutations, and the like: for here Paul is not saluting them with toom empty complements, but breathing out from the heart sincerity, and spiritual Christianity, wishing to them *grace and peace*.

II. As it is the duty of ministers to be labouring to get their people into God's favour, and at peace with him, by serious exhortation; so should they be making conscience to hold up their case to God, and deal with him effectually for the same; for this being in manner of a prayer, teacheth us so much.

III. Whatever thing else we have to do in a world, this should be our main business, and herein should we most exercise ourselves, to be sheltered under the favour and goodwill of God, and to enjoy his peace: for here, when he would wish them all the good he could, he wisheth them *grace and peace*; to show them, that as this was the best he could wish them, so it should be most desirable unto them, and most endeavoured after.

IV. It is a most ready way for ministers to gain their point with people, and to bring them up to obedience to the faith, at least to take their doctrine and exhortations well off their hands, to be carrying themselves so among them, as that they may see, that ministers are so far from wishing them hurt, or any thing which may tend to their prejudice, that, upon the contrary, if there be any thing better than another, that they wish them that from their very heart: therefore, that these Romans may take Paul's doctrine well off his hand, he lets them see, that he respects them so, that he wisheth from his heart they had the best things imaginable.

V. That is only solid and lasting peace, and sanctified prosperity, which floweth from God's favour and grace, as a stream from a fountain: therefore does he here set down *grace*, in the first place, as being the only fountain and spring from whence floweth *peace* with God, Rom. v. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God--* peace of conscience, and all prosperity, which may be understood under the name of *peace*.

VI. Such as are beloved of God, have this privilege among others, that as God's favour and goodwill are theirs, so he alloweth them peace and reconciliation, and a right to all other external advantages, (included under the word *peace*); and as he sees it conducing for their spiritual advantage, will let them enjoy the same: for after he has called them *beloved of God*, then he wisheth, or prayeth, for *grace and peace*. And his prayers teacheth us, that such as are beloved of God, have ground to expect peace, in the Lord's own time and manner.

VII. All beloved believers, be they weak or strong, eminent for grace or not, have one and the same Father: the meanest and weakest true believer in Rome, had the same Father with eminent and gracious Paul; therefore saith he, *our Father*.

VIII. The thrifty way of coming speed

with God in our petitions to him, for ourselves or others, is to be laying hold on him as our Father; and so engaged to hear the humble and approved desires of his own children: for this is Paul's way of it; in petitioning for grace and peace to these Romans, he takes up God as his covenanted God and Father, and considereth him under that notion, and claspeth about him, saying, *Our Father*. Our faith cannot choose but be weak, when we look upon God as one having no pity or affection toward us, but as standing aloof; and so our prayers cannot but be heartless.

IX. The only way for folk to win to the manifestation and intimation of God's favour and goodwill, and to win to true peace, is to be getting their interest in God as their Father, thro' Jesus, insured, and cleared: for no grace nor peace for us, but from *God our Father*. And when once that is, then all is right: then is his favour felt; then is the conscience calmed and settled; and then all things, and all cases, turn to the best.

X. As Paul's joining, in this his petition, Jesus Christ with the Father, teacheth us, that we ought to worship, in our approaches, by petitioning Jesus Christ, as we do the Father, and thereby acknowledge him to be God equal with the Father, able and willing to hear and to help; so it cleareth to us the manner how God communicateth to believers his spiritual favours, and temporal mercies also, viz. in Christ Jesus, or by virtue of his merits: for Christ is the conduit through which God conveyeth of his fulness; and therefore Paul thinks it not enough to say, *Grace be unto you, and peace from God the Father*, but adds moreover, *and the Lord Jesus Christ*.

VERSE 8. *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

After the inscription, the apostle setteth down the preface unto the whole epistle;

epistle; wherein he driveth on the same design, and useth arguments whereby he might prevail with them to welcome his doctrine. And in this verse we may take notice of two arguments, thus. *1st*, Every body that I have occasion to speak with, hath much to say to your commendation; the news of your submitting to the gospel of Christ, and shaking off of your Heathenism, is gone far and wide; every body commendeth, and speaketh to your praise; now it were a foul shame for you, that are so highly commended, to reject my message, and the truths of God I am to deliver; therefore you must take well what I say to you. *2^{dly}*, This your faith, and so commended, is not the thing that I envy, but that wherefore I am heartily glad; and so glad, that I cannot but bless God through Jesus Christ for the same: therefore look not upon me as your ill-wisher, but as one that rejoiceth to see you thrive.

HENCE LEARN,

I. As it should be the duty of all Christians to rejoice and be glad, when they hear of God's grace thriving among any people; so especially ministers should have a glad heart, when any under their charge are obeying the gospel; this should be their joy and rejoicing: therefore we see how glad Paul's heart is, that there is so much good spoken of these Romans: See Phil. i. 4. Col. i. 3. 1 Thess. i. 2. 2 Thess. i. 3.

II. The right way of venting and expressing our joy for the grace of God in others, is by way of thankfulness to God for the same: praises to God the Father, from whom cometh every good gift, and the fountain of all spiritual blessings, is the right channel for spiritual joy to run into; therefore Paul's joy runs out in praises, and thankfulness to God, *I thank, &c.*

III. If we would be at thankfulness for grace bestowed on ourselves and others, we would do well to look on it as coming from God, the Father of blessings; and as having its original from no lower efficient. When we look on God as the author, and

principal efficient of that grace, then will we be more fit to give him hearty thanks for it: for Paul's thanking of God, says, he looked on God as only worthy, as being the chief cause of it.

IV. Whether we be praying or praising, it were good for us to be looking on God as ours by covenant. It is a happy thing when every duty drives our hearts nearer God; and is so far from sitting in our light, and from keeping us from resting on our rock, that, on the contrary, it clears up our interest more; and in it we win to clasp our arms about God as ours: for then duties shall run apace. And, as with great boldness and confidence we will pray for others; so with greater cheerfulness will we thank God for his goodness to others, when our interest in God is clear: therefore, says Paul, *I thank my God*. Phil. i. 4. --- *Making request with joy.*

V. As all our spiritual blessings cometh to us in and through Jesus Christ our Mediator, Eph. i. 3. so should all our service to God go that same way back, through Christ; and in particular our praises and thanksgivings should be offered up to God, in and through Christ, Col. iii. 17. --- *Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God* --- See Heb. xiii. 15. therefore, says Paul, *I thank God through Christ*.

VI. As ministers hearty thanking of God, for any good that he hath done to their flock, should abundantly testify their love and respect; so also, should this their love, thus manifested, be a strong motive to move people to hearken to their exhortations: and therefore the apostle makes use of this as an argument, to mind them to welcome his doctrine.

VII. Albeit faith be a precious gift of God, who is to be blessed and praised for it, where-ever it can be found; yet a people, or company, their submitting of themselves to the gospel, (tho' it cannot ordinarily be expected, that and all every one of them hath true saving faith) should be matter of praise and thanksgiving; for feigned obedience is

much : for here Paul thanks God *for them all*. Now, it can hardly be thought, that all those had true and saving faith; and tho' it were truth, that all and every one among them were endued with saving faith, yet sure Paul thanks God for that faith which was spoken of far and near; and this behoved to be their profession, and not their saving faith, that was thus obvious, as to be the matter of discourse, and commendation, to so many in all places.

VIII. Folks submitting to the gospel should be more thought of, and in more account with Christians, than all their other outward enjoyments and benefits : for this was it that was so much taken notice of among those Romans, by the Christian churches, that Rome, or many there, were become professed subjects to Christ; and not that they were rich, and noble, and did excel in other worldly desirable things.

IX. Folks profession should lay hands on them to welcome truths from the hands of God's messengers, as this argument sheweth.

VERSE 9. *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.*

ANother argument is this : I would not have you question my love and respect to you, for I dare take God to witness; and that God too, of whose terrible majesty and greatness, I am so convinced, that I dare not trifle with him in any thing I do, but do serve him without hypocrisy, and cheerfully, even with my heart, that I forget you not in my prayers, but continually holds you up before God.

OBSERVE,

I. God is such an all-seeing Lord, as before him all our actions, how close and guised soever they be, are open and manifest : therefore Paul appeals to God in the matter, touching the truth in this particular, whereunto they were not privy.

II. It is lawful now under the gospel to swear, though not for every trivial and naughty matter, nor in our ordinary discourse, yet when lawfully called thereto, and when the matter is grave and serious; and our confirming of what we say with an oath, tendeth to the glory of God, and the edification of others : so much doth Paul's example teach us, in this his saying, *God is my witness*; which is a real oath.

III. As true love where it is, cannot be hid, but will break out in outward acts manifesting love; so it will particularly vent itself to God in prayer, in the behalf of the party loved : for the apostle makes use of his constant mentioning of them in his prayer, as an evidence to persuade them of the truth and reality of his love and affection.

IV. It is the duty of such that are taking an oath, to be sensible of the dreadful and terrible majesty of him with whom they have to do; and that he is one who will not be deceived : and this Paul teacheth us by his practice, who, to show what sense of a divine Majesty he had, when he was appealing to him, and solemnly calling him to witness, presently addeth, *whom I serve with my spirit*.

V. When men dare hazard their souls, in calling God to witness in any particular, it is our duty to believe it as truth, and not to question it any more, seeing an oath is an end of all controversy; for otherways the apostle had never taken an oath, if these Romans had not been bound to have rested persuaded of the truth of what he swore.

VI. Whoever are making conscience of one duty, and are making it their study to be sincere and hearty in it, will also make conscience of an oath, and beware to take God to witness an untruth : for after he has given his oath, that they might not question it, he presently subjoineth, *whom I serve in my spirit*. That they might not suspect his oath, he tells them, that he

is one that is ſerving the Lord with his ſpirit, in the work of the goſpel, where-to he is called.

VII. It is the duty of miniſters, in following forth their miniſterial calling, to be ſerving the Lord, and not to be ſeeking themſelves, remembering who has put them there; and therefore they ſhould ſo preach the goſpel, as that God, whoſe ſervants they are, may be glorified; and in every point thereof they ſhould carry themſelves, as doing ſervice to the Lord: therefore ſays Paul, *whom I ſerve in the goſpel.*

VIII. Becauſe miniſters, in preaching of the goſpel, have to do with God who is a ſpirit, that will be *worſhipped in ſpirit and truth*; therefore it is their duty to be labouring for ſincerity and zeal in the adminiſtration of their office: they ſhould preach the goſpel *with a pure conſcience*, 2 Tim. i. 3. earneſtly, ſeriously, with ardour, and great affection; therefore ſays Paul, *whom I ſerve in my ſpirit.* 1 Cor. ix. 16. --- *Necceſſity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me if I preach not the goſpel.*

IX. As the goſpel is nothing but glad tidings of good news concerning Chriſt; ſo the promulgation and preaching of the ſame goſpel, is from the ſame Chriſt, who fitted men for that purpoſe, and gave them a commiſſion to go preach the goſpel to all nations, Matth. xxviii. for thus it is called the *goſpel of his Son.*

X. Prayer is a duty that ſhould not be gone about in fits and ſtarts, but conſtantly; therefore ſays Paul, *without ceaſing, and always in my prayers.* 1 Theſſ. v. 17. *Pray without ceaſing.* See Luke xviii. 1. and xxi. 36. Rom. xii. 12.

XI. Thoſe over whom the Holy Ghoſt hath made us overſeers, ſhould lie near our hearts; and paſtors ſhould make conſcience to mind them to God, without ceaſing and wearying, as Paul's example teacheth us here.

XII. Not only ſhould we hold up their caſe to God who lie ſtill in impenitency,

but even ſuch as hath gotten ſome ſpecial bleſſing and favour from God, ſhould be conſtantly recommended to him, that he would keep that which he hath granted from dying out; and would through his bleſſing increaſe the ſame: for Paul ſays here, he made mention of thoſe Romans, whoſe faith was ſpoken of far and near, in his prayers.

XIII. The ſerious and conſtant minding of people to God by their paſtors, ſhould ſufficiently convince people of the reality of their paſtors love towards them; and being thus convinced, they are obliged to welcome God's meſſage at their hands; for this is the force of this argument.

VERSES 10. 11. 12. *Making requeſt (if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God) to come unto you.*

For I long to ſee you; that I may impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift, to the end you may be eſtabliſhed;

That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

THE apoſtle, in proſecuting his purpoſe further, doth make uſe of a new argument to this purpoſe: My love to you is ſuch, that I earneſtly long to be with you; it is my earneſt deſire to God, that he would grant me a prosperous journey towards you; I mean ſuch a journey as may be according to his good pleaſure: and that not by reaſon of any deſign I have to enrich myſelf thereby, or to take any thing from you, but that rather I may give you, and give you freely, even of thoſe things which God hath given me; even ſuch things as may tend to your profit and eſtabliſhment: not as if I looked upon you as young tender babes, needing ſuch props, or as if I were ſo far above you, as incapable of receiving any advantage from you, in the ſame kind, for as I would give, ſo would I take; therefore

fore you must not reject this my exhortation.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. As it is christian-like and comely for people to be acknowledging God, and his providence, in all their ways; so a Christian, in a spiritual frame and temper, will be praying for, and taking the meanest and most ordinary favour from God; as Paul's example teacheth us, who here did supplicate the Lord for his journeying.

II. Ministers that are faithfully minding their work, and desirous of the salvation of poor souls, will be sparing no pains, but seriously looking for, and desirous of opportunities and occasions, wherein they may be in a capacity of doing somewhat for their advantage: for here Paul, a man travelling in pain, till he saw the salvation of souls, will not only write, but moreover is longing for, and desirous of an opportunity of speaking to them face to face, if that way he may advantage them more, than by writing; for he made *request for a prosperous journey* unto them.

III. So desirous of the salvation of poor souls should ministers be, that they should be so far from shunning occasions of advantaging people, because of difficulties in the way, that they should resolve upon hardships and losses, in the way of the faithful discharge of their duty, and lay their account for the worst, that may be; for here Paul says, *if by any means I might have a prosperous journey*, &c. as if he had said, I do not value what crosses or troubles I can meet with in my way, yea, I resolve on the worst; let it cost me what it will, I would gladly see you.

IV. In our supplications to God, it is our duty to be very submissive: and in these temporal matters we ought to give God full liberty to cut and carve as he pleaseth, and to give when and after what manner he pleaseth; nor should we desire any thing that is not according to his good will and pleasure. Therefore Paul, tho' he was making request unto God for a

prosperous journey, yet with great submission of spirit, putteth a blank in God's hand (whom he knew to be wiser than himself) and would have his petition granted when, and what way it seemed good in his eyes, and so as it might be had with his good-liking, therefore (saith he) *by the will of God*.

V. As prayer slacketh, when affections to the thing prayed for, are weak and coldrife; so strong desires will be as oil to cause the wheel of prayer run more smoothly: and where prayers are ardent and sincere, they argue strong affections to the thing desired by prayer; for here Paul shows, why it was, that he was so ardent in his prayers for a prosperous journey towards these Romans, *viz.* because he had a vehement and strong desire to see them.

VI. Christian love, as it is strong in itself, and rising from a right principle and ground; so it extendeth even to such as they, in whom it is, never saw, and is desirous of a near capacity of benefiting them; as we see in Paul, who was most earnestly desirous to see these Romans, that thereby he might be in a further capacity of doing them good.

VII. As the servants of Christ who would approve themselves unto their Master in the day of accounts, should have an eye unto the thriving of their Master's work, in all their deportment; so their very journeying hither and thither, and their seeking after opportunities to converse with people, should be for the doing good unto their souls, and for the advancement of the work of the Lord among them: therefore Paul, as one that did not seek himself, or his own things, longed so earnestly to be with them, that he might do their souls good; his end was not to get some temporal courtesy and favour from them, but to establish their souls, by speaking according to the gift given him of God, for this he was desirous to impart to them.

VIII. Not only is it the duty of the stewards

ards of Chriſt, to be diſtributing of theſe good things the Lord hath laid under their hand, as opportunity offereth; but they ſhould be ſtudying to find out occasions, and ſo deſirous to impart of what God hath given, as to long for, and earneſtly deſire to have the opportunity, and to be put into a capacity of giving out of that food which God hath made them ſtewards of; for faithful Paul is here *longing to ſee them, to the end he might impart ſome ſpiritual gift, &c.* God giveth them no talent to hide up into a napkin.

IX. As the office of the miniſtry is from the Lord, and given freely unto whom it ſeemeth good in the Lord's eyes to give it; ſo theſe endowments and qualifications wherewith they are fitted and enabled for the work, are not of their own ſpinning; but are alſo freely beſtowed by the Lord, whether they be ordinary or extraordinary, and ſhould be acknowledged as coming from him, and for that cauſe more faithfully laid forth for him: for here theſe qualifications that were in Paul whether for exhortation, for doctrine, for prophecy, for interpretation, or the like, are called *gifts*; gifts freely given, and gifts given of God's free grace, as the word imports. See 1 Cor. xii. 8. 9. 10. 11.

X. As thoſe gifts and qualifications are from God's Spirit, who worketh them in whom he pleaſeth, and beſtowed by the Lord for a ſpiritual end; ſo ſhould miniſters be far from abuſing them unto their own carnal advantage and bye-ends, and ſhould only employ them for the ends appointed of God, *viz.* the ſpiritual emolument and benefit of ſouls; for in theſe reſpects are they called here *ſpiritual gifts*, and gifts that might tend to their eſtabliſhment.

XI. Such is the weakneſs of grace oft in believers, and ſuch is the falſhood and deceitfulneſs of their hearts, as yet not thoroughly renewed and changed; and ſuch is the ſtrength of corruption, and the force of temptation, and the malice and reſtleſſneſs of adverſaries, that they ſtand

in great need of ſupporting and underproping; of being rooted and haſted in grace, and built up; and therefore doth thoſe Romans need to *be eſtabliſhed*.

XII. Miniſters work is not ended when they have brought ſouls in unto Chriſt; but though that be a great work, yet beſide that, they are to labour to keep thoſe in Chriſt, who are brought to Chriſt, leaſt they ſlide back and ſuccumb in the hour of temptation: therefore doth Paul here labour to have them eſtabliſhed, and for this cauſe wiſheth to be among them.

XIII. As believers are not above ordinances, and a miniſtry, as long as they ſtand in need of eſtabliſhment; ſo ſuch is the love and great goodneſs of God towards them, that he, for that end, hath appointed a ſtanding miniſtry unto the end of the world; and endued men with ſpiritual gifts whereby ſouls may be eſtabliſhed and confirmed: for here the Lord provided means whereby theſe Romans might be brought in to Chriſt; yet Paul knowing that they needed to be eſtabliſhed, wiſheth to be among them for that end, for which alſo God had gifted him. And as theſe Romans needed ſuch means, certainly no leſs doth believers now a-days ſtand in need of the like; and God's care is no leſs now than then.

XIV. As young believers are ſubject to many diſcouragements; and among other things that uſeth to diſcourage them, this is one, that when they hear any thing intimating that they are not ſuch as they ought to be, or when they compare themſelves with others, who poſſibly are of longer ſtanding, and of greater experience, and findeth ſuch a great diſproportion, preſently they are ready to conclude, that all are wrong with them, or at leaſt, to droop and hang the head in diſcouragement; ſo it lieth at the door of the miniſters of the goſpel to ſee to this, and to uſe all poſſible fair means to prevent the ſtumbling of the weak; as Paul doth here, fearing they ſhould have ſtumbled,

bled, and been discouraged at his speaking of their needing to be strengthened, &c. by mitigating what he said formerly, in this 12th verse.

XV. The best way for pastors, or others, to prevent the discouragement that young beginners are obnoxious unto, is not to harp too much upon their weakness and infirmities, but rather to be putting themselves in the same case and condition with them, as needing the same supply and help that they stand in need of; and so making the case common, it will be the less grievous and burdensome unto weak beginners: therefore Paul tells them, he had need of exhortation or consolation, (for the word will bear both) as well as they, and that from them, as well as they from him.

XVI. There is none so far advanced in Christianity, while they are on this side of the sun, as not to need help and comfort even from others that are their inferiors, as Paul teacheth us, while he confesseth here, that he would be comforted, or exhorted, even by these Romans to whom he was writing.

XVII. As iron sharpeneth iron, so Christian communion and fellowship, when rightly improven, will prove a mean whereby Christians will be mutually edified, and built up; as Paul teacheth us, while he saith, that his conversing with them would tend to their mutual comfort.

XVIII. Then is christian communion well managed and used, when thereby mutual discoveries and evidences of the reality of God's grace in them is held forth; and proof given of their knowledge of, and faith in Christ, and mention made of their mutual experiments of God's love, &c. for the mutual faith both of Paul and these Romans, was to be made known and discovered, when they were to meet together.

XIX. Believers meeting together, and by conference, or other exercises, shewing to one another their embracing of Christ,

adhering to him, and living in him, will by this means strengthen and comfort one another, and also admonish and exhort such as faint, and are like to weary, and hereby the strongest will be profited by the weakest; for it was by *their mutual faith* that Paul says, he *would be comforted together with them*.

VERSE 13. *Now, I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.*

A Nother argument much to the same purpose: Not only have I been desirous of a prosperous journey to come unto you, and instant with God by prayer, that my desire might be granted, but moreover I have been labouring for opportunities, and casting in my mind, how, and what way, and what time, I would win unto you; and oft-times laying down resolutions, that, at such or such a time, I would come to you; only the Lord thought good to lay some impediment in my way, and nothing but that kepted me from coming unto you; and that not for any particular of mine own, save what concerneth you, that some of you that are not yet brought in to Christ, might be brought in, and so my ministry should have fruit among you, as it hath among others. Therefore,

HENCE LEARN,

I. As it is not enough for people to be praying for that which is for their behoof, but also should moreover be so serious, and earnest in endeavouring after the same, as that they ought to be laying hold on every fair occasion whereby they may attain what is prayed for; so, in particular, ministers of the gospel should not think it enough, to pray for such or such means, whereby they might edify the people, but also study to lay hold on the first

ſtill offered occaſion; for Paul, we ſee, did not only pray for a prosperous journey to come to theſe Romans, but beſides, was uſing other lawful endeavours, apprehending whatever fair occaſion did preſent itſelf: Acts xix. 21. --- *Paul purpoſed in the ſpirit--- to go to Jeruſalem, ſaying, After I have been there, I muſt alſo ſee Rome.*

II. Many a time it ſeemeth good in the Lord's eyes, to ſtop lawful purpoſes and reſolutions; and theſe purpoſes nevertheleſs laudable and lawful: and it is ordinary for faithful miniſters, in their miniſterial function, to have their deſires obſtructed. Paul would gladly have been at Rome, that he might have gained ſouls; and yet though his deſire was lawful and commendable (for here he avows it, and maintains it) the Lord was pleaſed to put a ſtop in his way.

III. Whenever the Lord in his providence, either layeth, or ſuffereth the devil to lay, invincible impediments in our way, ſo as we cannot come by our purpoſes and endeavours, in a lawful and honeſt way, we ſhould then reverence Providence, and as contentedly ſit down, as if we had gotten an expreſs prohibition: therefore ſays Paul, he was *forbidden*, (as the word ſignifieth) when hindered, either by God's giving him his hands full elſewhere, or by Satan the like; ſee Acts xvi. 10. &c. 1 Theſſ. ii. 18. *Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again; but Satan hindred us.*

IV. The great Lord, whoſe providence reacheth all things, taketh ſpecial care of the goſpel, and the preaching thereof, and ſends it to whom, and when, he pleaſeth, and not to others, nor till he thinks fit; he can ſtop the wheels when, and as long as, he will: as here he ſtopped Paul from carrying the goſpel to them at Rome for a while. Whatever hand ſecond cauſes may be in this, his ſupreme righteous arm ſhould be marked, and acknowledged.

V. One of the great deſigns of miniſters, in their travelling and marching from place

to place, ſhould be the gaining of ſouls to Chriſt: this ſhould be the intended fruit of their painful labours. This was one of the ends why Paul would have been at Rome, *viz.* that *he might have ſome fruit among them*; by which he meaneth the converſion of ſome to Chriſt.

VI. The goſpel's gaining ground and doing good in one place, ſhould encourage the meſſengers thereof to carry it farther; therefore his finding the goſpel having fruit among other Gentiles, made him the more deſirous to go to the Romans.

VII. So great deſire ſhould the miniſters of the goſpel have to ſee it thrive, as if all the fruit of their pains and labour were their own, and none's elſe; and therefore he calls the fruit his, *that I might have, &c.*

VERSES 14. 15. *I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians, both to the wiſe, and to the unwiſe.*

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the goſpel to you that are at Rome alſo.

HAvING from the tenth verſe expreſſed the vehemency of his deſire to be among them; and held forth many ſpeaking and undeniable evidences thereof; to the end he might prevail ſo far with them as to entertain kindly his epiſtle, and the doctrine therein delivered; he here further confirms, and giveth reaſons of this his deſire, from the inward principle that moved him; to this purpoſe: Do not think ſtrange that I have ſuch a ſtrong inclination to come unto you, and to preach the goſpel among you, for there is bonds lying upon me; and I am under that debt and obligation to preach the goſpel, not only to you, but to all the Gentiles whatſomever, be they Grecians or Barbarians; be they of the learnedeſt, wiſeſt, and moſt judicious ſort, or of the rudeſt and moſt barbarous and ignorant: and therefore queſtion not, but, ſo far as I am able, and as God will give way, in his wiſe and well-

ordering providence, I am ready, and at a call, to preach the gospel to you also at Rome.

HENCE LEARN,

I. All such whom the Lord employeth in the work of the ministry, are not to look upon the preaching of the gospel, and thereby the gaining of souls, as an arbitrary and indifferent thing, which they may set about, when and how they please, and leave off again, as they think good; but as a piece of work unavoidably bound upon their back, and a task which by no means they can get shunned; for it is here held forth as a debt, *I am debtor*, says Paul. See 1 Cor. ix. 16. 17.

II. The consideration of this, that there is such a necessity lying upon the preachers of the gospel, to endeavour after the conversion and establishment of poor souls, as it should prove a spur in the sides of such as are employed, to walk answerable to their obligation and duty, notwithstanding of what difficulties can be imagined to be in their way; so should it move people, not only not to spurn at the messengers of the gospel, when diligently following their duty, and setting against ignorance and profanity, but also heartily and sweetly to welcome the gospel, and cheerfully yield obedience thereunto: all which is implied in the word *debt*. For what honest man will not be moved at the sight of his obligation, to endeavour after a fulfilling of it; and who will not take that well off a man's hand, which they see him bound to do, especially when it is for their own advantage, as the payment of a debt is.

III. The only wise Lord, at the beginning of the gospel, saw it needful for the spreading of the same, and for founding of churches, to give a commission to some to preach the gospel, not to one congregation only, but to all people, far or near, to whom God in his providence would bring them. They were not fixed to one particular flock, but had the broad

world for their charge: and such were called Apostles, and other extraordinary persons, whom God raised up, for that instant, and laid aside again when he thought fit; among whom was Paul, who had the whole Gentiles in his commission, *Grecians and barbarians*.

IV. Such is now the darkness of the understandings of men by nature, since that general confusion which befel mankind at the fall of *Adam*, that were they never so well polished and dressed with natural speculations, and adorned with moral virtues, they cannot of themselves attain unto the knowledge of Christ in the gospel; but wise and unwise, Grecian and barbarian, are all alike: and to them the gospel must be preached, and Paul must have a commission to preach to them the unspeakable riches of Christ: 1 Cor. ii. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

V. Howbeit men foolishly doting and resting upon their vain natural speculations, should think meanly of the doctrine of the gospel, as not answering their humours, and foolish imaginations, and account it *foolishness*, 1 Cor. i. 23. yet there is such depths in it, as may give the best of their brains enough to do: and withal, containing the mind of God, and holding forth his counsel so clearly, that through God's grace, the simplest idiot, and barbarian, may take it up: and therefore Paul says, he is a *debtor to both wise and unwise*; knowing that it was a mean for the instruction of the one, as well as of the other; and as it would give instruction to the barbarian, so the Grecian, for all his wit, would stand in need of it, and receive light by it.

VI. As the ministers of the gospel have not their flocks all of one size and kind, but some wise and some unwise; so it is their duty to be endeavouring to pay that

debt

debt they owe to both, and ſo to preach as both may be bettered; babes may have their milk, and grown Chriſtians ſtrong food: for Paul ſays, he was *debtor both to the wiſe and the unwiſe*. See 1 Cor. iii. 1. 2. Heb. v. 12. 13.

VII. A right fight of miniſters their, commiſſion over ſuch and ſuch a charge, ſhould put them in mind of, and incite them to, every particular duty, to every particular perſon within their charge, ſo far as they are able: for Paul, from the conſideration of his commiſſion over Grecians and barbarians, infers particularly his duty of preaching to the Romans, ſaying, *So, as far as in me is, I am ready*, &c.

VIII. Albeit the conſtant ſettled charge of the miniſters of the goſpel now, be not of ſuch a latitude as was the charge of the apoſtles; yet there is none, comparing their ordinary endowments and qualifications with the extraordinary endowments of the apoſtles, but muſt ſee more work for him than he can get done; and ſo cry out with the ſame Paul, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?* and therefore the apoſtle here ſays, *As much as in me is, I am ready*, &c. Importing, that though he was willing to preach to them, and others of his charge, yet he was not able to get all done.

IX. Notwithſtanding that miniſters of the goſpel cannot get their commiſſion followed forth in every point; yet that ſhould be ſo far from diſcouraging them, and making them deſpair and quite the work, that rather it ſhould be as oil to make their deſires to flame and increaſe, and their inclinations more forward and bent to do all that is within their power, according as occaſion offers: therefore tho' Paul could not get liberty to preach to the Romans, yet he was ready, *as much as in him was*.

X. However the deſires of the ſervants of the Lord ſhould be ſo ſtrong towards the gaining of ſouls, as that it ſhould be their meat and their drink to do the will

of him that ſent them, and ſhould make them ſhake off all the intanglements of this life, 2 Tim. ii. 4. *No man that warreth intangleth himſelf with the affairs of this life*---and whatever may prove diſtractions, to impede them in their meſſage; yet they ought not to wreſtle againſt God and his providence, when he lays impediments in their way: for of ſuch impediments Paul makes exception here, while he ſays, *as much as in me is*; that is, ſo far as God gives liberty, there ſhall nothing on my part hinder: if God lay any obſtruction in my way, there I muſt ſtand.

VERSE 16. *For I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt: for it is the power of God unto ſalvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek.*

THE apoſtle is here backing what he ſaid, by pre-occupying an objection, and withal coucheth in the boſom of it an argument to welcome his doctrine. It might have been objected thus: You ſay you are ready to preach the goſpel to us; but how think you to do ſo, when the wiſe ones in the world have it in contempt and deriſion, and do not value the goſpel, nor the carriers thereof. He answereth: However they think little of it, yet I am not moved thereby to have it in leſs eſteem; I am ſo far from being aſhamed of it, that I glory of it; and that for good reaſons too. 1. *Because it is the goſpel*; good news, and glad tidings: and who needs be aſhamed of that? 2. *It is the goſpel of Chriſt*; treating of him, good news of him, and from him: and ſhould I be aſhamed of it? 3. *It is the power of God unto ſalvation*: It is that effectual and powerful mean and instrument in God's hand, whereof he makes uſe to bring down the ſtrong holds of Satan in ſouls, and carry ſouls towards heaven ſafely: and ſhould I not glory of that? 4. *It is thus efficacious only to believers*, and to all ſuch

as close with Christ offered in the gospel, be they rich, be they poor, without exception: and should I think shame to carry such a message? 5. The Lord thought so much of it, that the first proffer of it was made to the specially-privileged people; *to the Jew first*. And, 6. However this box of sweet ointment was first broken up among the Jews, and they first honoured therewith, yet the sinell of it was diffused farther *to the Gentiles*: and should I be ashamed to carry such a worthy, savory and excellent box? And thus, with what farther followeth in the next verse, having given sufficient grounds why he would not be ashamed of the gospel, he (as I said) tacitely insinuateth this; that seeing he was not ashamed to preach the gospel, they ought not to be ashamed to hear and accept the gospel of Christ, which is so powerful for the saving of all believers, be they Jew, be they Gentile.

OBSERVE,

I. Such is the implacable maliciousness of Satan, and the desperate wickedness of poor, ignorant, proud, foolish souls, whom Satan stirreth up, that the gospel shall not want opposition where-ever it cometh; and though it be glorious and *worthy of all acceptance* of itself, yet ordinarily it is accompanied with opposition, calumnies, and foul aspersions, which is here supposed, in that he says, he will not be *ashamed of it*.

II. All that opprobry that can be cast upon the gospel, and all those crosses that do ordinarily attend the preaching of it, at the hands of one or other, should not so discourage the messengers of it, as to give it over; but rather should stir them up to a rejoicing in their employment, and to magnify their office: for Paul's example in *not being ashamed of it*, should teach us as much. See 2 Tim. i. 12.

III. A right and sanctified sight and apprehension of the work, and excellency of the gospel, will be a mean to stir up the carriers of it, to diligence, and to set about every piece of their work with carefulness,

whatever difficulties they may in all likelihood encounter with: for it was the consideration of this, *that the gospel was the power of God*, that Paul gives as a reason why he would do what he could to preach the gospel to those at Rome, whatever reproach and ill will he should meet with thereby: this was it that hardened him, against all crosses imaginable.

IV. Seeing the gospel is nothing but good news, and glad tidings of peace to rebels, of salvation and redemption to captivated souls, of bands to bind up the broken-hearted, of light to the blind, and of the oil of joy, for such as are heavy in spirit; no discouragement imaginable that the carriers of it can meet with, should make them ashamed that they are counted worthy to carry such a sweet, joyful, refreshing, pleasant, and acceptable message: for so much is imported in the very name it getteth, *the gospel*, or good news.

V. That the gospel hath such a noble subject to treat of, as is Jesus Christ, *the image of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. *The brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. and such a one as is this King of kings, to be its author and institutor, it should so much the more commend it to the carriers of it, and encourage them against what affronts or disgrace they can be exposed to, in their faithful discharge of their office: so Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, it being *the gospel of Christ*.

VI. However the gospel seem contemptible to many, to whom it seemeth foolishness, because of its simplicity; and however many not only stand out against it, and refuse to yield obedience thereunto, but also set themselves against it, and make all the opposition they can; yet it is, in itself, a mean appointed of God whereby he bringeth about strange and wonderful works of power; and where the Lord is pleased to back it with his spirit, becomes *mighty to the pulling down of strong holds*, 2 Cor. x. 4. and as a two handed sword levelleth

levelleth all before it: Therefore it is here called *the power of God*. Heb. iv. 12. *For the word of God is quick and powerful.* 1 Cor. i. 18.—*But unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.*

VII. In that the gospel is such a powerful instrument and mean, whereby God is pleased to bring about mighty and wonderful works, the carriers thereof should be so much the more encouraged, and heartened to go through all contradiction and seas of obloquy and disgrace, knowing that mauer all their opposition, it will be effectual for gaining of souls, where and when it seemeth good in his eyes, whose instrument it is: for here Paul says, *he was not ashamed of the gospel*, and why, because it is *the power of God*.

VIII. How sad and lamentable must the condition of such be, as either want, reject, or oppose this gospel; seeing it is the ordinary, and only ordinary mean, whereby souls are brought to salvation: how feckless soever it seem in itself, it is *the gospel of salvation*, Eph. i. 13. and *the grace of God that bringeth salvation*, Tit. ii. 11. that discovereth that way, and bringeth folk into it; it is *the ministration of the Spirit*, which quickeneth, and giveth life, 2 Cor. iii. 8. therefore it is here called, *the power of God unto salvation*.

IX. The consideration of this, that the preaching of the gospel is such a necessary and profitable mean, a mean whereby poor souls are brought into a state of salvation, should so harden the messengers thereof against all possible affronts, and render the gospel so glorious and excellent in their eyes, that no spot of ignominy or reproach cast upon it, should cause them turn their backs thereupon, as ashamed thereof: for, for this cause, that the gospel was *the power of God unto salvation*, Paul was not ashamed of it.

X. Albeit the gospel, where backed by the Spirit, be glorious and powerful, for the accomplishing and bringing to pass wonderful works; yet it is only believers

unto whom it becometh the favour of life unto life: therefore saith Paul, *it is the power of God unto salvation, to them that believe*. See Heb. iv. 2.

XI. Such is the freedom of God's offer in the gospel, that whatever sort of sinners they have been to whom the offer is made, and however vile and abominable they have been formerly, yet they shall be welcome, on condition that they heartily receive and embrace the same, and welcome Christ that is offered therein; for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, *to all such as believe*, without exception.

XII. Great and manifold are the privileges of people in covenant with God; and however they, for their iniquities, deserve little good at God's hand, yet he is so mindful of his covenant, as to show them some favour beyond others: and therefore these people of the Jews, being the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and so in covenant with God, howbeit undeserving at God's hand; yet get here the first offer of a Mediator; the cabinet of the precious jewels is first opened among them, who were a greatly privileged people, Rom. ix. 4. 5. *Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, &c.* It is to them first: Matth. x. 5.—*Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.* See Acts i. 8. chap. xiii. 46.

XIII. Albeit God was pleased to honour the covenanted Jews with the first offer of the gospel, yet he would not confine the same among them, but thought good to make the Gentiles, that were once strangers and foreigners, fellow-heirs and citizens; for now the middle wall of partition being broken down, *there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him: For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved*, Rom. x. 12. 13. for here it said, *to the Greek also*.

XIV. The consideration of the efficacy and usefulness of the gospel to all that believe, be they of what nation or kindred soever;

foever; and how the messengers thereof are so far from flinching from it, because of persecution, or what malice can effectuate, that they glory in it; should be a strong inducement to people to embrace heartily, and yield obedience unto the gospel: for this is the force of the apostle's argument, whereby he would persuade them to welcome the gospel, because *he was not ashamed of the gospel, it being the power of God unto salvation, &c.*

VERSE 17. *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith:----*

HIS last argument, taken from the usefulness and efficacy of the gospel, he confirmeth in the fore part of this verse; and sheweth, that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to all such as believe, because in the gospel that righteousness by which we must stand before God's tribunal, and which is of his invention, is therein declared and exhibited to believers, be their faith weak or strong, *from faith to faith*; that is, that righteousness of God by which we must be justified, is exhibited, and applied by faith that is sincere, and is upon the growing hand, and advancing from one degree to another.

OBSERVE,

I. The Lord hath made such a connection betwixt righteousness, as the way, and life and salvation, as the end, that none needeth to expect salvation without righteousness; Hab. i. 13. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil.*---- 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?*---- See Rev. xxi. 27. For here the apostle's argument supposeth it.

II. That righteousness by which alone we attain unto salvation, cannot be learned by natural knowledge; but the natural man, however in other things he be sharp enough sighted, yet he cannot reach this, for it is a matter that must be *revealed in the gospel*; and so cannot be known but by

the gospel, *for therein is this righteousness revealed.*

III. However in folks by nature there be an inclination to obtain happiness by a covenant of works, which is broken long since; yet that righteousness by which we must stand before God's tribunal, and which is revealed and made known in the gospel, is not a righteousness of our own purchasing, and merit, or devising, but a righteousness fallen upon by the infinite wise God, or a righteousness of one who is God; for it is called *the righteousness of God*. Phil. iii. 9.----*The righteousness which is of God by faith.* See Rom. iii. 21. and x. 3.

IV. This righteousness of God which is revealed and exhibited in the gospel, is made ours and applied by faith, laying hold on Jesus and his righteousness; for it is revealed *from faith*, or by faith.

V. The least degree of faith, provided it be sincere and true, appropriateth this revealed righteousness of God in the gospel to us: for it is revealed *from faith to faith*; that is, from the smallest measure and degree of faith to the greatest.

VI. Such is the nature of true faith, that however Satan be using many means whereby to make it fail, and die, yet it is still growing from one degree and measure to another, *from faith to faith*.

----*As it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

THE apostle having shown, how the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to all that believe, by shewing that therein is the way to salvation, thro' faith applying the righteousness of God, without which no salvation; he comes to the main question which he is about to clear, touching justification by faith alone, without the works of the law.

Here then beginneth the second part of the epistle; and the first doctrine which he proposeth and confirmeth, is anent justification

ification by faith alone. And this assertion, or thesis, he choiceth to set down, as it were couched in the prophet's words; wherein also is held forth a confirmation from Scripture. Take the thesis thus: *We are justified by FAITH, and not by WORKS.* His first argument standeth thus: If so be Scripture affirm, that we are *just* by faith, and by faith we live, then are we *justified* by faith. But the former is true; Therefore. The connection is undoubted; and the words of Habakkuk prove the assumption, *viz.* That we are just, and live, by faith: for it is written, Hab. ii. 4. *The just shall live by faith; or, The just by faith shall live:* for it may be read both ways.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. The doctrine of justification by faith is so necessary to be well understood, and so oppugned and obscured by Satan and his instruments, as it concerneth all to be well acquainted therewith, and to labour to have it cleared, and confirmed to us from the word of the Lord: therefore doth Paul insist so much upon it here, and beginneth with, *As it is written.*

II. So precious should truth be unto both pastor and people, and so wary ought both to be of error, that as the pastor should labour to bring forth nothing unto people but what he can produce scripture for, and show that *thus it is written*; so people should search and try whether the doctrines delivered be according to the word written, or not: therefore doth Paul confirm his assertion by *thus it is written.*

III. However the Lord hath been pleased to afford us many helps, whereby we may attain unto the clear discovery of truth, and which we may safely make use of in their own place; yet the only test and touchstone by which we are to try what is truth, what is error, and upon which we are to rest, is the word of the Lord: *Thus it is written*, should sufficiently clear us of the truth.

IV. Howbeit it hath seemed good in the Lord's eyes, to give us so ample a rule to walk by, and to examine doctrine by, as many proofs may be had of one point; yet seeing the author of this word is a God of truth, who cannot lye, one word, and one place of scripture, should be sufficient to confirm us of the truth of a doctrine; as Paul's citing only one place of scripture gives us to know.

V. We ought to be so well acquainted with the Scriptures, that the very reciting of the words should be enough to put us to the place where it is, tho' it be not named: therefore does Paul only say, *As it is written*; naming neither where, nor by whom.

VI. So full and comprehensive is this touchstone, the law and the testimony, by which we are to try what is light and what is darkness, that we may confirm a truth from a place where that truth is not directly and intentionally handled, nor is the direct scope of the place to speak to it: for here the apostle makes use of that place of Habakkuk, where the prophet is not speaking how and what way people may be justified before God, but how the godly should be supported, and have a life of it even in days of trouble; only it might be gathered from it by a just consequence, thus: If the righteous have a comfortable life, thro' waiting on God, in an evil time, and that by faith, it must be by faith that he is brought into a living state, and justified. Or, if it be read the other way, *The just by faith shall live*, then it clearly holds forth, that it is by faith (*viz.* laying hold on Christ's righteousness, and in his blood) that they are just, or justified. It is a great wrong done to scripture, when consequences clearly deduced therefrom, are made invalid.

VII. However we find not the way of the justification of sinners, so clearly and fully laid down in the Old Testament as in the New; yet justification by faith is an Old Testament truth; for the apostle confirmeth

firmeth this doctrine from a place of the Old Testament, Hab. ii. 4.

VIII. In citing scripture for probation of truths, we may safely cite so much of it as maketh to the purpose, leaving what maketh not for it; provided that by so doing we falsify not the testimony, and make it speak, being thus curtailed, the contrary of what it would affirm, were it whole: therefore Paul leaveth out *his*, which is in Habakkuk, and only citeth, *the just shall live by faith*.

IX. The only way how sinners are brought out of the state of death, into a state of life, and justification, is by faith, or closing with, and heartily embracing of, Jesus Christ for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel. It is by this, our leaning on him and his righteousness that we are just, and justified; for it is *by faith that we are just*.

X. There is such an inseparable connection betwixt a state of justification and life, that all such as are justified by faith in the blood of Christ, and have fled unto the city of refuge, and sheltered themselves under the wings of Christ, may be sure, that as they are for present into a state of life, so they shall be carried thro' all difficulties and temptations, and at last inherit life eternal: for *the just by faith shall live*.

XI. As it is by faith laying hold on Christ's righteousness that people are justified; so it is by faith drawing strength from Christ as a root, that they live the life of grace and holiness: and by the same faith, viewing God as reconciled in Christ, and faithful in his promises, and minding the good of souls in all sad dispensations, it is, that they have a life of comfort under the saddest troubles that can befall them; for all these ways do the *just live by faith*. See Gal. iii. 11. and ii. 20. Heb. x. 38. *Now the just shall live by faith*.----

XII. As at the first by faith (as an instrument or mean appointed of God, for the accepting and embracing of Christ and

his righteousness) they were instated into a justified state; so it is by this same faith, and not by works, that they are justified afterwards, and get out new extracts and pardons; for *the just* (or he that is already justified) *liveth* (in that justified state) *by faith*.

VERSE 18. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*

There is a second argument which the apostle prosecuteth at large, after this manner: Either we must be justified by faith or by works. But so it is, we cannot be justified by works before God; Therefore. The proposition is most clear, because these two ways are supposed here by the apostle to be inconsistent together. And as for the assumption, that we are not justified by works, he proveth at large, thus: If any man were justified by the works of the law without faith, then either they would be Jews or Gentiles that would be so justified, because all the world are either Jews or Gentiles, and there is not a third sort: but neither Jew nor Gentile can be so justified. And this he maketh good, first of the Gentiles, unto the 17th verse of chapter second; and then makes it good of the Jews, unto the 20th verse of chapter third.

Here then is the first argument whereby the apostle proveth that the Gentiles could not be justified by their works; to this purpose: If so be the wrath of God be revealed from heaven against the Gentiles, for their sins and transgressions against both tables of the law, then they could not be justified by their works; but *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness*. And this he confirmeth by an argument, shewing the main and root-evil among them, for which God was so displeased, *viz.* Because they laid fetters on
that

that light which they had, and kepted it in prison, and did not let it go forth at liberty in a holy life and conversation; the truth they had in their understandings was not put forth in practice, but kepted in by unrighteous and wicked actions.

HENCE LEARN,

I. By nature we are so far from having any thing in ourselves, whereby we may expect to be justified before God, that, on the contrary, there is nothing in us, but ungodliness, and unrighteousness, and the curse and wrath of God hanging over our heads because of that; for this the apostle's argument supposeth as truth.

II. There is such a deal of pride in us by nature, that we will never heartily and fully come out of ourselves, and take the single and humble way of faith whereby to be justified, until we be once driven from all hopes and expectation of any good from ourselves, and see nothing but sin and iniquity in us, and God's curse and wrath due to us therefore: This argument which the apostle useth, and the connection, sheweth so much. We will not be convinced that *the just by faith shall live*, till we see *the wrath of God revealed against ungodliness, and unrighteousness*.

III. However the ever-blessed Lord be free from all those perturbations of mind which fallen men are subject to, yet he is oft said to be wroth with sinners because of sin: sin is that which he hateth and abhorreth, as being a violation of his righteous laws, against which he will testify his displeasure, in justice.

IV. Outward plagues and judgments (not excluding his spiritual judgments on souls for sin, whereof we will hear afterwards) may sufficiently demonstrate God's displeasure against man for sin; and however it seemeth good to the only wise Lord, sometimes, and for wise ends, (as to try and exercise his people) to lay upon them some outward stroke or other, tho' not by way of punishment or chastisement for sin; yet we may well conclude, that there

is sin in these persons, be they young or old, whom God pursueth with death, or other outward strokes; and the best may safely go in and search out their own sin: for it was *against ungodliness, and unrighteousness*, that *God's wrath was revealed*: Lam. iii. 33. *For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* Verse 39. *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?*

V. A clear sight of sin, and God's displeasure testified against it, may abundantly convince us of a necessity of choosing another way whereby to be justified than our own works; for being convinced of our short-coming, and so not being perfect, and of God's justice; so that we may rather expect condemnation than justification for our works, and all this by God's judgments on us, or others; it is but a folly to foster a good conceit of our own righteousness any more: for this is the sum of the apostle's argument.

VI. Every sin, how little soever in our eyes, who take not up sin aright, deserveth God's curse and wrath; and all that flieeth not in to Jesus Christ for shelter, shall certainly find his wrath revealed against them for every sin, even the least: for it is said, *The wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness of men*, be it less or more.

VII. So righteous and just is the Lord, that he will not countenance or bear with sin in whomsoever it be, but will impartially punish it; for his *wrath was revealed against the ungodliness of men*, without exception, even of those who seemed best, having more knowledge of truth than others.

VIII. Man has no will to be driven from his own self-righteousness, but will look with a wrong eye upon the most clear demonstrations of its insufficiency; for hardly would they look upon these judgments as coming from God because of their sins, but thought they came from

chance and fortune; and therefore Paul tells them, God's wrath is *revealed from heaven*, and those judgments had not their rise lower.

IX. However men may run on in their iniquity, and conceive false hopes of escaping the just judgment of God, yet at length they will find themselves deceived, when judgment inevitable shall come on, and they shall have no way to escape; when *God's wrath shall be revealed from heaven*.

X. However since the fall our sight be dim, yet the Lord hath left so much knowledge of truth, as may in some measure hold forth part of our duty, both towards God and man; for even these Heathens had the knowledge of truth.

XI. The knowledge of truth, touching God, hath such a natural tendency to practice, and answerable walking in obedience, that for any to do otherways, is as ~~it~~ were to do violence unto truth, and to incarcerate it; for these Heathens, by their ungodliness and unrighteousness, did block up and imprison the truth, or the knowledge of it.

XII. It is a heinous and heathenish evil to be crossing light, and to walk in wickedness over the belly of conscience; a sin against which God is highly provoked, and occasioneth all impiety: for it was the Gentiles sin here, that they *detained the truth in unrighteousness*.

VERSES 19. 20. *Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.*

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

IN confirmation of the last argument he had said, that they detained the truth of God in unrighteousness; and now he makes out this in both its parts; and first,

that they had some knowledge of the truth, he proves in these two verses; and next, that they did incarcerate this knowledge, he confirmeth, verses 21. 22. 23.

So the apostle in these two verses is shewing what that knowledge of God was which the Heathens had, and how they came by it. God's eternal power and Godhead, which are in themselves invisible, was a thing the knowledge whereof was attainable by the light of nature. They had common principles of knowledge given them of God, whereby, looking upon the works of the creation, they might safely and solidly gather, what a God he was, and what was his due; so that they were rendered inexcusable in abusing this light; and their mouths were stopped, so that they had nothing to say for themselves, why they lived in ungodliness and unrighteousness.

DOCTRINAL OBSERVATIONS.

I. So dim and dark is that small candle-light of nature, and so deep and unsearchable a mystery is God, that there are many things in God which nature is stone-blind into, and will never be known by all nature's light; for the apostle supposes that there is something which may not be known, when he speaketh of *that which may be known*.

II. However the Lord Jehovah be in himself unsearchable, yet hath he left as much light in folks, that were they desirous, by the very principles of natural knowledge, they might see as much of God as might convince them that he only is to be worshipped, loved, and feared; for it pleased the Lord that as much a might be sufficient for this end, should remain attainable by sand-blind nature; *this is that might be known*.

III. Those common notions, and natural principles, (which, if well studied would sufficiently convince folk that God only is to be worshipped, feared, and obeyed) are so deeply rooted and fastened into the minds of people, that nill the

will they, they muſt keep them; and therefore Paul ſays, that it is manifeſt *in them, or within them.* That knowledge ſticks ſo faſt, that they cannot get it ſhaken away for all their wickedneſs, it is ſo deeply implanted in them.

IV. Whatever knowledge of God we get, even by common principles and notions of nature, ſhould be acknowledged as a ſpecial gift of God; as here that knowledge which they had by the mere light of nature, and the works of creation, without any further revelation, is ſaid to have been *made manifeſt unto them by God*: for he it was that implanted that light in them; he it was that gave them thoſe common notions, and wiſdom to draw from theſe principles, native concluſions; and ſo may well be called the author of any knowledge they get.

V. Beſides the dim light of darkened nature, conſiſting of ſome few undeniable and manifeſt principles and notions, engraven upon the mind of every man, Heathens, and ſuch as are without the pale of the church, have no other mean whereby to attain unto the knowledge of God, but the dimly-printed book of the creation: theſe two are all their volumes.

VI. Howbeit God in his eſſence and attributes be inviſible, yet the Lord hath ſet ſuch prints and footſteps of himſelf in the creatures made by him, as pure nature, with the uſe of reaſon, ſeriously conſidering what is created, may win to know much of God; for *the inviſible things of God are clearly ſeen, being unſuſſeſſed by things that are made.*

VII. More particularly, nature may reaſon, and gather from the creation, that being this world, and the things in the world, did not exiſt, and take their being of themſelves, but of ſome other, that other behoved to have ſome cauſe, to be the firſt cauſe itſelf; and ſo of neceſſity there muſt be ſome firſt cauſe that liveth of himſelf only, and giveth life to all other things; and thus reaſon, that

there muſt be a God: And ſeeing he created all things of nothing, (for there could be no pre-exiſting matter beſide himſelf, not made by himſelf) he muſt be all-mighty; and ſeeing if he had had a beginning, he behoved to have had ſome cauſe, and ſo ſhould not have been the firſt cauſe; and now ſeeing he is the firſt cauſe, he muſt never have a beginning; and if never a beginning, ſo never an end; and ſo he muſt be eternal. Thus, *by the things that are ſeen, the Heathens may win to ſee his eternal power and Godhead.*

VIII. All the knowledge of God that can be attained by the light of nature, and the works of creation, is not ſufficient to inſtruct folk for ſalvation; but only may ſtop the mouths of people, and render them without excuſe, in that they have not walked up to their light: ſo (ſays he) *that they are without excuſe.*

VERSES 21. 22. 23. *Be cauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened.*

Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools:

And changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beaſts, and creeping things.

IN theſe verſes the apoſtle ſheweth, how and after what manner it was that they detained the knowledge of God in unrighteouſneſs, and did not walk up unto their light, in theſe particulars: 1. *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God*; that is, when, by the light of nature, and the works of creation, they knew that there was a God, that made all, and ruled all, they gave him not the glory of his attributes that was due to him; they did not worſhip him as the only one God, eternal, omnipotent, moſt wiſe, moſt good, and moſt merciful. 2. *Neither*

were thankful; that is, they did not acknowledge his providence in ruling and disposing all events; nor his bounty in bestowing good things, even his common mercies, upon them; but ascribed all things to chance and fortune. 3. They became vain in their imaginations; they ran out in imagining strange things of this God, and drew false conclusions and deductions from the principles, and so imagined a multitude of gods, and many vain conceits. 4. *Their foolish heart was darkened*; they, reasoning after this foolish, vain manner, ran themselves blind, and bewildered themselves that they knew not where they were; and set up their idolatry, which even nature's light would have condemned, had they not put much of that out. 5. *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools*; in following these inclinations, they imagined they were attaining to more perfection in knowledge, and so gloried in themselves, as if they were only wise in so reasoning; yet in following their own darkened brains they became fools, in imagining a God according to their own fancies, and deluded minds. And, 6. *They changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things*. After they had taken up God in their own carnal and sensual manner, and feigned him to be such a one as they imagined, they invented many representations of God, and erected statues like men, birds, beasts, and creeping things, and gave that homage and worship that was due to God only, who is incorruptible and unchangeable, unto those creatures who are corruptible; and thus changed his glory.

We may look upon these verses also, as holding forth a proof, of that which the apostle had said last, *viz.* That their mouths were stopped, and they had no excuse for themselves: As if he had said, They were so far from walking up to

their light, and doing that which nature's light might have taught them, *viz.* to give God his own glory, in thought, word, and deed, as the only one God, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, just, holy, and merciful; that, upon the contrary, they gave it unto creatures; and vainly reasoned away God's glory unto images of men, birds, and beasts: and therefore they can pretend no excuse.

OBSERVE,

I. As nature's light, and that light which may be had from the works of creation, will teach folk that there is a God, so will it teach folk also, that this God should be reverently and highly esteemed of; and that we should walk in reference to him, as only all-sufficient, eternal, only wise, just, and merciful: this was the Heathens sin in not glorifying God after this manner.

II. As it is a heinous and heathenish iniquity to refuse to acknowledge God in his attributes, and to walk answerable thereunto; so it is a violent imprisoning of the knowledge of God that nature's light will afford, and will be sufficient, tho' there were no more, to render men without excuse in the day of reckoning: for hereby he proveth, that these Gentiles detained the knowledge of God in unrighteousness; *they did not glorify God*, even though *they knew him*.

III. Let men be at never so much pains and trouble about worshipping of God, and invent never so many ways, and such ways as are most specious to carnal hearts, whereby to worship him; yet the Lord will not account that a glorifying of him, it not being according to his own way which he hath manifested in his word, or written, tho' dimly in small characters, on the hearts of men and women by nature: for notwithstanding of all the pains these Heathens were at, in inventing and following several ways of worship, yet all was in vain, it was not a glorifying of God

as God; according to that manner which their natural knowledge, if well improved, would have taught them.

IV. The beſt way to improve the knowledge of God which we have, is to be laying out ourſelves every way to the glory of God; to be carrying along with us reverend, high, humble, and holy apprehenſions of the almighty, eternal, moſt juſt, and gracious God, and walking under the lively apprehenſions of his divine Majeſty, and to be worſhipping him in ſpirit and truth, according to his own appointment: for thus ſhould theſe Heathens have *glorified God*, and vented their knowledge of him.

V. Our knowledge of God, how great ſoever it be, will not avail us in the day of judgment, if it hath not had influence on our practice, but will tend to the aggravating of our guilt: for their knowing of God did not avail them, but tended rather to the ſtopping of their mouths, and making them without excuſe, becauſe they did not glorify him aright, when they knew him.

VI. So bountiful and gracious is the Lord, the fountain and ſpring of all goodneſs, and ſo liberal, that of his goodneſs, good and bad, and all, are receiving, ſo as all, even the worſt, are drown'd in his debt: for ſo were theſe Heathens, as is intended, in that their guilt is ſaid to be ingratitude.

VII. It is a heinous guilt, and ſuch a ſin as the very light of nature will condemn, to be unthankful, in not acknowledging the moſt ordinary and common mercies which we receive, as coming from God, but from chance and fortune, or the like; in not ſeeing the hand of God in them, nor looking upon them as ſtrong obligations to obedience: for thus were they guilty.

VIII. Idolatry and ſuperſtition are ordinarily attended with unthankfulneſs and ingratitude; for this ſin of ingratitude is joined with idolatry, in not *glorifying God*

as God: Hoſ. ii. 5. *For their mother hath played the harlot: ſhe that conceived them hath done ſhamefully: for ſhe ſaid, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.*

IX. It is neither ſafe nor ſound for folks to truſt to their corrupt hearts, and carnal ſenſe, in diving in to the knowledge of God: their vain hearts led them to ſtrange reaſonings about God, and ſo they erred, and became vain in their *imaginations*.

X. Superſtition and idolatry are not the reſult of the true and practical knowledge of God, but of folks giving way unto vain empty ſpeculations, and imaginations, of a carnal, ſenſual brain: for they worſhipped not God aright; and how ſo? *They became* (it is ſaid) *vain in their imaginations*.

XI. When the knowledge of God which we have, is not practical, and leading us to glorify him aright; ordinarily we truſt to our own brains, and fall upon diverſe and ſinful ſpeculations, and empty imaginations, and run out on fooliſh ratiocinations, diſcovering the emptineſs and vanity of our underſtandings: thoſe Gentiles did not *glorify God as God*; and what came of it? *They became vain in their own imaginations*.

XII. However carnal ſenſual wits may applaud themſelves in their profound reaſonings about God and his attributes, and imagine ſome felicity and ſatisfaction to themſelves in that courſe (tho' their knowledge be not practical); yet in the end their courſes ſhall prove vain, and all their profit and advantage ſhall be meer vanity: for it is ſaid, *They became vain in their imaginations*.

XIII. However men may think themſelves able enough, by their own carnal and vain wit, to find out and acquire the right and acceptable way of worſhipping and glorifying of God, beſide the right and only rule; yet in the end they prove themſelves

themselves but *ignorant, foolish, and without understanding*: therefore their hearts are said to be *foolish*.

XIV. The more pains men take, and the farther they go on, in following their own carnal, foolish, and vain hearts and imaginations, milkening the right rule whereby to attain unto the right knowledge, and the right manner of worshipping and glorifying God, the more they lose their labour, and blindfold and insnare themselves; the more we pry into this mystery in an unlawful way, the more we put out our own eyes, and the more blind and ignorant we are. They left God's way in searching him out, and the way of his worship, and took themselves to their vain, fantastical, brain-sick imaginations; they put out the little dim knowledge they had, and *their foolish hearts were darkened*; they obscured their very natural reason.

XV. It is ordinary to see such who, leaving the allowed way of acquiring the knowledge of God, and following the dictates of their own foolish imaginations, and vain hearts, think to acquire some knowledge of God, become proud and conceit: And whatever knowledge we have, if it work not kindly upon our practice, and have some influence there, it will ordinarily puff up, and make us think much of ourselves; for the knowledge of God that these Heathens attained to was not practical, and what they hunted for was by unlawful means; and so *they professed themselves to be wise*; they grew proud and conceit, and gave out themselves to be the only wise folks, and made great ostentation of their reasonings.

XVI. Whoever followeth an untrodden path in finding out the lawful and acceptable way of worshipping of God, and useth their own fancies and foolish imaginations, out of an intention to acquire some vain glory and applause, are so far from true glory, that they bewray their folly, and so shoot short of their design;

for, *in professing themselves wise, after such a manner, they became fools*.

XVII. It is the fruit of abused light, and of a darkned understanding, to have carnal apprehensions of the great God, and to take him up, in our fancies and imaginations, under any similitude and bodily representation whatsoever; for these Heathens blindfolded themselves, and then took up God, in a carnal manner, under this or that notion or similitude of *man or beast*.

XVIII. However foolish man imagine that it is a setting forth of God's glory the more, to worship him under the similitude of images, and after that manner; yet God looketh upon such a way of worship as a robbing him of his glory and majesty, in giving what is his due unto these, or such like, base creatures; as here we see, *they changed the glory of God into an image made like unto man*, by imagining God to be like such or such a thing, and so worshipping that which did (as they thought) represent God, or God under it.

XIX. When men once give way to themselves, and loose the reins, and follow their own fancies and deluded understandings, they will run on, ere they rest, to abominable courses, as mad-men; for so they here ran from ill to worse, until at length they came to this, to worship creatures, or God under the similitude of the basest creatures, that is, *of fourfooted beasts, and creeping things*.

XX. Let men imagine and take up God under what notions and representations of what corruptible things they please, in following the wild, fantastic conceits of their foolish, darkned hearts and brains, he remains still the same unchangeable God, for when they have thought all they can, he is the same *incorruptible God*, without alteration, or shadow of change, being *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*.

XXI. A right consideration of God, and his nature and majesty, and of the baseness

baseness and naughtiness of the creature, as it will discover the folly and madness of such as, from any superstitious fancy, or corrupt principle, ascribe and perform that unto the creature, or to that which is but a similitude of the creature, which is proper and peculiar to the only ever-blessed God; so will it aggravate their guilt, and serve to demonstrate the justice of God so much the more, in taking course with such abominations: for so we find it here recorded of them as their great sin, and evidence of folly, and as that which cleared God's justice in that sore stroke that followeth, that *they changed the glory of God, who was incorruptible, into an image, and an image of one who was but corruptible, and to four-footed beasts, &c.*

XXII. Man at his best, and in his prime and flower, is but corruptible fading nothing, carrying a body about with him that is daily posting to corruption.

XXIII. In whatever respects man is to be preferred to brutes and creeping things, yet in respect of sharing of any thing which is God's due, he is to be put in the same category and rank with the basest creeping things; for no more should they have *changed the glory of God into an image made like corruptible man, than of beasts, or creeping things.*

VERSES 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, thro' the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men,

working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

IN the 18th verse (as we shewed) the apostle began to speak of a second argument, whereby he would prove, that we are not justified by works before God, which he hath prosecuted at large hitherto, and forward; and this argument had two branches, the first whereof, *viz.* That the Gentiles are not justified by works, he hath been speaking unto, and farther prosecuteth until the 17th verse of chapter second. Now, when we began to speak of this part of the argument, we shewed it lay thus: If so be the wrath of God be revealed from heaven against the Gentiles for their sins; then they cannot be justified by their works: But the former is true; *Ergo, &c.* Now, in confirming the second proposition there was two things to do; *First*, It was to be cleared, that they were sinful: And, *secondly*, That because of these their sins God's wrath was revealed from heaven against them. And these two he fully cleareth in this chapter. And in the verses preceding this 24th verse, he hath cleared what their sin was: and in the verses following the 28th he doth the same. And here he sheweth how the wrath of God came upon them, and what way it was that God did manifest his displeasure against their ungodliness; and withal to clear the equity of God's procedure, and his wisdom in punishing them so and so, he rehearseth some of their fountain-evils and heinous transgressions, and sheweth how in punishing them the Lord did them no wrong; but gave them a just meeting and recompence, and sent such judgments on them, as had their sins engraven upon them in legible characters.

The apostle in summing up these spiritual plagues wherewith he punished the Heathens, he parcels them in three parts, or heads, and cleareth God's equity in each of them, by shewing how they were the just desert of their abominations. And the *first* is, verse 24th; which hath reference to the verses preceding, where their sin is laid open. Their sin was gross idolatry, in setting up images of creatures, and giving unto these that which was God's due: now the punishment that came upon them because of this gross iniquity was this; God did, as a just Judge, judicially deliver them up to the swing of their own carnal and filthy hearts; to be acted and led away by the lusts of their vile hearts, that as they had no regard to the honour and glory of God, so they should have no respect unto the honour of their own bodies, but might basely prostitute them, and rob them of that honour which was their due. The *second* is, verses 26th and 27th, which hath reference to verse 25th, where their sin is set down; which was this: They ascribed the attributes of God, which are his peculiarly, and do belong to him truly, unto an image, which is a mere lying thing; and not only so, but gave that homage unto those creatures of their own making, which is due only to the ever-blessed God, who only should be acknowledged to be such, and will be such for ever, as all christian hearts should wish that he may be blessed for ever. Now, for this cause the Lord did judicially deliver them up unto their vile affections, as their tormentor, and his executioner. And what followed? They became brutishly vile, and committed such lewdness as very beasts would abhor; and all sexes among them became horribly guilty of Sodomy, and such filthiness as very nature would account abominable and unseemly: and thus the Lord did pay them home in their own bosom, and gave them a just recompence of their er-

ror, which was meet; that seeing they ran mad on spiritual fornication and filthiness, they should be judicially punished, by being given up to bodily filthiness. The *third* is, verse 28th; where also their sin is set down, to clear the equity and suitableness of the stroke: *They liked not to retain God in their knowledge*; they laid aside all thought of God, and the small portion of knowledge which they had, they trampled upon, and wilfully shot out their own light, and therefore God gave them their will, and their fill of blindness; for he gave them up to a darkened judgment, and a mind void of all understanding; even in matters touching their neighbours, they were so judicially blinded, that they saw not the very principles of equity, which should have directed them in their duties one towards another.

OBSERVE,

I. As it is blasphemy, upon the one hand, to say that God is the author of sin, so it is impious, and derogateth from his power and wisdom, who is the supreme and absolute Governor and Ruler of heaven and earth, to run to the other extreme, and say, that God useth a bare permission, and connivance anent the existing of sin in the world; as if sin fell out beyond his decree and will, seeing he willeth and decreeth that sin shall exist and have a being; he permitting it, tho' not effecting it: for here we see there must be a positive act of his will anent the existing of it, seeing it is a judicial act of his just sovereign power, as righteous Judge, to *deliver sinners up unto uncleanness*, to debase their own bodies, and to *vile affections*, and to a *reprobate mind*, or blinded understanding.

II. Tho' God doth decree and purpose, for wise and holy ends, that sin shall be committed by wicked men, he permitting and wisely ordering the same; yet he is not to be looked on as the culpable cause; but the foul spring, and sinful rise of these

these enormities is in man's self : for here he says, *they were given up to filthiness, or uncleanness, through their own hearts lusts.*

III. Tho' wicked men may bless themselves in their wicked courses, when they thrive in them, and go on from evil to worse, and never meet with a check, either from within, or from any visible temporal plague and judgment without; yet fools do not understand how God is punishing sin with sin, and testifying his wrath and displeasure more against them for their abominations, by giving them up to the swing of their corruptions, and laying the bridle on their own neck, than if he were laying on the sadest temporal judgments imaginable: for here God is said to punish sin with sin, and only this punishment is mentioned (tho' it is like they did meet with other temporal strokes) as being the sadest, that they were *given up to uncleanness, to vile affections, and a reprobate mind.*

IV. Such is the force and strength of corruption in all of us by nature, that if God would draw back his restraining grace, and give us up to the will of our own hearts, we needed no other tormentor, or executioner of God's wrath; for it would hurl us headlong to all wickedness whatsoever, even to the most unnatural, abominable, and unseemly actions: for what drew these Heathens, both men and women, to those unseemly actions, and filthy Sodomy, even *their own hearts lusts, and their vile affections*; and these were God's hangman, or executioner.

V. It is a righteous thing with God to punish spiritual fornication with bodily fornication, and to give up such to bodily filthiness and uncleanness who commit spiritual lewdness and idolatry: these Heathens ran away to idolatry, and therefore God gave them up to uncleanness: Hof. 12. 13. 14. *My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath*

caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.---Therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery, &c.

VI. Fornication, and all acts of filthiness, is a great dishonour done to the body; for thereby the body is robbed and spoiled of its privileges and honour: because when it should be *presented as a sacrifice to God*, Rom. xii. 1. and should be handled as a *member of Christ*, 1 Cor. vi. 15. and as a *temple of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. vi. 19. it is presented as a sacrifice to the devil, and made a *member of an harlot*, 1 Cor. vi. 16.

VII. As God is just, and will not suffer sin to go unpunished, so is he wise in weilding judgments answerable to such and such sins, and can fit them and suit them so unto their iniquities, as any may see how easy a matter it is for God to be fit-side with sinners, and to pay them home in their own coin: for they dishonoured God by robbing him of his glory, and he soon found a way how they should be dishonoured too; and they liked not to know God, and in God's justice they knew not one another.

VIII. As it is no easy matter for sinners to be convinced of their wronging of God, so especially it is a matter full of difficulty to get idolaters, and such as worship graven images, (under what notion soever) convinced, that in so doing they rob God of his glory, and wrong his majesty: therefore, after the apostle had said as much, verse 23d, here he comes over it again, and says, *they changed the glory of God into a lie.*

IX. When God's hand is stretched out against us because of sin, it were good for us to be taking a view of our sin and judgment together; and hereby reading our sin with our judgment, we shall see the heinousness of our guilt, and the justice of God's procedure; and therefore Paul gives them renewed sights of their guilt and punishment one after another.

X. As images are nothing else but lying empty vanities, so to worship them, or God by them, is to change God's glory into that lie: this was their sin.

XI. However men may conceive that they are no way wronging God, nor giving what is his due unto images, when they set up that way of worship which he hath never instituted; yet the Lord looks upon them as such as worshipped and served the creature and not the Creator; for the wisest of those Heathens did not take their images to be their gods, but worshipped God, as they thought, in and by these, and yet we see here it is said, *they worshipped the creature more than the Creator.*

XII. Tho' idolatry hath a natural tendency to the robbing of God of his blessedness and perfection, yet notwithstanding of all those courses which idolaters follow, they are so far from lessening his blessedness, that, on the contrary, they heighten and aggravate their own guilt in labouring to wrong him, who is blessed, and that for ever: All this is imported in that he adds, *Who is blessed for ever.*

XIII. A spiritual and gracious heart cannot hear of others their wronging of God and dishonouring him, but they must stand up in defence of his Majesty, and labour to assert and vindicate his glory: and the hearing how others rob God of his glory and due, will make them close with him, as the only ever-blessed Lord: and therefore does Paul here break out in this, *Who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

XIV. As it is an ordinary thing for the judgments of God to be far out of the sight of wicked men; and for God's hand not to be seen in his ordinary or temporal rods and afflictions, because of sin; so, especially in his spiritual plagues, it is a hard matter for folks bewitched with sin to read God's anger in these, or once to take notice of them as plagues: therefore does Paul come over this again, and again, and here, verse 26th, say, *For*

this cause God gave them up to vile affections.

XV. As it is no easy matter for carnal folks to see God's hand stretched out, either in temporal or spiritual plagues; so is it as hard a matter to see the procuring cause of such and such punishments; and therefore God also must point us to the sin in particular for which his anger burneth: hence it is that Paul points out clearly and particularly what their sin was for which God punished them, and sayeth, *Wherefore, and for this cause, &c.*

XVI. When once lusts and concupiscence begin to burn within the heart, and the affections are defiled, then, ordinarily, sin ends not there, but breaketh out in all manner of unnatural and abominable practices; for so it did here, when the lusts of the heart got liberty, and the affections were defiled, then the most abominable Sodomy and filthiness that can be imagined followed: *For even the women did change the natural use into that which is against nature, &c.*

XVII. Whatever spiritual or temporal plagues God sends on sinners, they ought to look upon it as a drink of their own brewing; as a fit recompence, and meet reward of their wicked doings: this judgment is said to be *a recompence which was meet.*

XVIII. When God once gives up folks unto the swing of their own corruptions, then there is no bonds of modesty, or natural light, or reason, that will hemm them in; but they will break over all banks, and be violently carried down with the torrent: for here, when God left them, their very women, whom nature might have taught more modesty, and men also, who might see more of the vileness of the course by the very light of nature, became filthy in their Sodomitical courses.

XIX. As it is a heinous crime in itself to err in the matters of God and religion, and to leave the way of worshipping him which he hath commanded, and follow

way which he never allowed; ſo whoever indulge themſelves therein, will not ſtop there, but run on to other vices and wicked courſes againſt their neighbour, as we ſee in theſe Heathens.

XX. However men may pleaſe themſelves in their wicked courſes, and think they have to do with a merciful God, who will not ſtill take notice of their carriage, and puniſh them for every thing; yet they will find in the latter-end that they have been deceived, when they find him a God juſt and righteous, who will multiply and increaſe his judgments, as they multiply and increaſe in ſin: for here the longer and farther they went on in ſin, God's judgments grew, till at length judgments had overtaken heart, affections, actions, ay, and mind, and judgment and all.

XXI. Howbeit it be a ſad plague to be left of God to commit wickedneſs with greedineſs and delight, even when there is light in the conſcience left to bear witneſs and give teſtimony againſt ſuch practices; yet it is a far ſader ſtroke when he gives folk up to a reprobate mind, and a darkned underſtanding, that they ſhall not know when they are doing wrong; therefore this judgment of being given up to a reprobate mind, comes in the laſt place.

XXII. When men trample upon and contemn the ſmall light they have, and go over the belly of their conſcience, and ſhut out thoughts of God, it is juſt with him to inflict this ſore and ſad puniſhment upon them, and grant them their hearts deſire, that as they like darkneſs beſt, they ſhould have nothing but darkneſs: and therefore ſays Paul, *as they liked not to retain God in their knowledge ſo he gave them up to a mind devoid of all knowledge.*

XXIII. As it is by the knowledge we have of God that we do in a manner retain him and poſſeſs him; ſo when we do not retain this light and knowledge we have, but put out that little light we have gotten, we do what in us lies to baniſh God from us; and this is a crying ſin; this

was their ſin, *they liked not to retain God in their knowledge.*

XXIV. The leſs knowledge of God, and light, we have, the more incapable are we of doing duty either to one or other; and ignorance is an inlet to all miſchief: for when once their judgments were judicially blinded, and they had loſt the very principles of humanity, which very nature taught, then they *did thoſe things which were not convenient*; and they could not but do thoſe things, for God gave them up to a mind void of all underſtanding, that they might do that which was not convenient.

VERSES 29. 30. 31. 32. *Being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciousneſs; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whiſperers,*

Backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, boaſters, inventors of evil things, diſobedient to parents,

Without underſtanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death) not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.

THE apoſtle doth here farther clear how heinouſly guilty the Heathens were before God, by enumerating a large number of iniquities which did reign among them, of ſome whereof all were guilty: and, withal, ſheweth how God's anger was kindled againſt them, in bringing in thoſe reigning ſins as fruits and effects of their being given up unto their own reprobate mind. And this evidence is, *firſt*, ſet down in general; *Being filled with all unrighteouſneſs*: Then, *ſecondly*, inſtanced in twenty-two particulars, to verſe laſt. And, *thirdly*, their guilt is aggravated, verſe laſt, from two particulars; 1. In that they committed thoſe evils, even notwithstanding that, by the very light

of nature which God had implanted in them, they knew he would take vengeance, and punish them for such acts of unrighteousness with death. 2. In that they thought it not enough to commit those heinous crimes themselves, but also did stir up, countenance with delight, and encourage others to do the same abominations, by *taking delight in them that do them.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Since the fall of Adam, whereby the covenant of life was transgressed, there is no man who by nature is not wholly defiled with sin and corruption, and in whom sin hath not overgrown all the faculties of the soul: for here these (and as these were, so all by nature) are said to be *filled with all unrighteousness*; they have not one empty room in all their souls, all are filled with ungodliness.

II. So mighty is this torrent of corruption in folks by nature, that if God would but give way, and give folks over unto their own perverse, reprobate minds, it would carry them headlong to all acts of iniquity, and run out to all, even the most abominable; wickedness whatsoever: for here they are said to be *filled with all unrighteousness*; that is, all manner of unrighteousness, they scarred at none.

III. As the servants of the Lord, who would bear in convictions upon peoples consciences, would not think it enough to insist on generals touching their sinfulness, but condescend on particulars; whereby convictions become more pungent; so all such as would be thoroughly convinced of their guilt before God, would not dwell on generals, but bear in upon their own consciences particular convictions, for particular guiltiness: therefore doth Paul instance particulars, after that, in general, he had told they were filled with all unrighteousness.

IV. Fornication, and all uncleanness, is a heinous sin before God, however men may account light of it, as a venial small

fault; seeing every man is to *possess his vessel in sanctification and honour*, 1 Thess. iv. 4. for this was a sin laid to the charge of those Gentiles, however they made small reckoning of it.

V. Men left of God will take such delight in wickedness, as they will take up the very trade of Satan, who is that wicked one, who taketh great pains to molest and destroy people, and study with full purpose and endeavour to hurt, and with craft to undo their neighbours: for these who were given up to a reprobate mind, were filled with *wickedness*, pravity, or troublesome ness.

VI. When men lay aside thoughts of God and his all-sufficiency, and do not delight to dwell upon the thoughts of that fulness which is in him, they then set their hearts so upon the world, as they cannot be satisfied with any portion thereof which the Lord alloweth them, but have inordinate desires to have more, tho' to the prejudice and hurt of others, by hook and crook, (as we use to say); and greedily labour to scrape together, and to keep near the things they have acquired in a world: for this is the *covetousness* which these who liked not to retain God in their knowledge gave themselves to.

VII. When men once give way to this evil of *covetousness*, which is *idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. and lay down a firm resolution to be rich, then, as they expose themselves to *many temptations, snares and hurtful lusts*, which draw on to *perdition*, and pierce themselves through with *many sorrows*, 1 Tim. vi. 9. 10. 11. so, in particular, they lay aside all pity and charity, and become malicious or mischievous, labouring to overthrow utterly others about them, that they may rise upon their ruins; therefore is this *maliciousness* joined with *covetousness*: See Prov. i. 19.

VIII. As envy is a heinous evil of itself, being a vice whereby men are discontented at, vex and grieve for the good of others, and their prosperous estate, and a

fruit

fruit of a wicked heart left to itſelf; ſo it is an ordinary concomitant of covetouſneſs; for this ſolloweth, they were filled with all *envy*.

IX. Envy, as in its own nature it tendeth to undo the very perſon in whom it is, breeding in the man continual diſquietneſs, and ſo is *rottenneſs to the bones*, Prov. xiv. 30. ſo it is an ordinary inlet to murder, and openeth the door to all ſuch violence: for as they were filled with *envy*, ſo alſo with *murder*.

X. Men given up to a reprobate mind will ſtep over all known principles, and be hemmed in with nothing, when their corruptions have a prevalent power over them, but break out in the moſt outrageous abominations, and not ſpare to commit murder, and far leſs to give themſelves to unlawful ſtriſe and contention, thro' pride and vain conceit: for they were filled with *murder*, and with *debate*.

XI. As it is ordinary for ſuch as are given to covetouſneſs, to be uſing crooked courſes, and deceitful ways, whereby to deceive their neighbours, and enrich themſelves; ſo ſuch whoſe hearts are ſet on envy, murder, and debate, will be labouring, by cunning and ſubtilty, to hurt and entrap ſuch whom they would hurt: for it is added, they were full of *deceit*, which may be underſtood both ways.

XII. Morofity in mens carriage, whereby they cannot be ſpoken to, and peeviſhly take all in evil part that others do, ſo as they mention the faults of others, which they might with more modeſty conceal, at leaſt expreſs in ſofter terms, and ſpeak good of none tho' they have a fair occaſion, is a ſin condemned among the very Heathens; for it is reckoned up upon their ſcore, that they were full of *malignity*.

XIII. It is a ſin that very nature would condemn, to be deſaming, underhand, our neighbour, that thereby we may breed variance and diſcord betwixt ſuch as are at friendſhip with other, Prov. xxvi. 20.----

Where there is no tale-bearer, the ſtriſe ceaſeth. Among thoſe we ſee there was *whiſperers*. See Prov. vi. 19.

XIV. So it is an inhuman and abominable evil to ſpeak evil of our abſent brother, putting the worſt conſtruction on his actions, diminſhing or hiding what is commend-worthy in him, diſcovering what in charity we ought to conceal, and making more of his ſlips than we ought; and an evil that ſuch as are given to whiſpering will eaſily fall into: therefore is this added, *backbiters*.

XV. When God gives up men unto their own wills, for all the pretence of love and reſpect they carry to him, they will run on to all miſchief, and make no ſtay till they openly declare that they are haters of God; having no liking either to think of God, to ſpeak of him, or to hear of him: thus were theſe Heathens *haters of God*.

XVI. Nature would abhor at the ſin of contumeliouſly and inſolently injuring, either by word or deed, our neighbours, by reproaching them, by robbing them of what is their due, and violently ſpoiling them; for this ſin was among the Heathens too, whom God gave over to blindneſs, they were *deſpightful*: See Micah ii. 2.

XVII. When men are judicially blinded, ſo as they neither ſee what they have, nor what they want, they are ready then to be puffed up with a vain conceit and admiration of their own ſuppoſed worth, to arrogate to themſelves what they ought not, and to diſdain and condemn others as far inferior to them; for the judicially blinded Heathens became *proud*.

XVIII. Though, when we are neceſſarily put to it, for our own good name, the good of the church, and ſo the glory of God, we may boaſt, after the example of the apoſtle Paul, 2 Cor. chap. x. xi. and xii. and make a modeſt commemoration of our own good parts and actions, provided it be done with modeſty and humility, and we conſtrained to it, 2 Cor. xii. 2. 3. and ſo

so as we magnify God's grace, and acknowledge our own weakness, *ver. 7. 8. 9.* yet vain and foolish boasting of what we have done, of purpose that we may seem some body among people, and be highly accounted of, is a great sin, and the daughter of pride; for after pride here followeth *boasting*.

XIX. Such is the corruption of the heart of man, that if God leave him, he will not only be carried headlong to all manner of known wickedness and abomination, but will also run to the devising and inventing all new unheard-of ways whereby God may be dishonoured; and in this their wicked and devilish invention will be fruitful: so these Heathens are moreover said to be *inventors of evil things*.

XX. As it is an unnatural evil for children to be stubborn and rebellious, and to refuse obedience to their parents, of whom they have their being next to God; so it is just with God, that such as forget their duty to him, and become haters of him, should be left to carry themselves most unnaturally against their parents: therefore are they said to be *disobedient to parents*.

XXI. Men giving way to their corrupt hearts, and the swing of their beastly affections, will be so carried headlong thereby, to do many things without discretion, judgment, and understanding; and as this is their judgment, so is it their sin still, that they are *without understanding*.

XXII. Tho' covenants, vows, or promises, made concerning things unlawful, cannot bind, but may and must be broken; yet if they be of things lawful, they ought to be made conscience of, even tho' made with evil men, and rashly, and that to our prejudice: this is one of the Heathens sins, that they were *covenant-breakers*. *Psal. xv. 4. ---He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. 2 Sam. xxi. 1. ---It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.*

XXIII. It is just with God that such as

are haters of him should be given up to that inhumanity, that they should respect neither kindred, friendship, nor alliance; but should be void of all natural affection, sparing none, that thereby they may get their lusts satisfied: these haters of God were also *without natural affection*.

XXIV. Howbeit men may account it a matter of wisdom and manhood, to refuse to be reconciled to such as have injured them, and make it a principle of policy to keep and hide malice under a friendly countenance; yet to be of such a disposition, argueth a man to be given up of God to a reprobate mind: among other sins, which were the fruits of this judicial stroke, this was one, they were *implacable*.

XXV. It is a great sin, and where it reigneth argueth a graceless heart, to be merciless, not sympathising with the miserable, or laying their miseries to heart, nor endeavouring to relieve them from their distress; for this was another sin of these Heathens, they were *unmerciful*.

XXVI. The Lord hath constituted and appointed a rule of justice according to which he hath resolved to rule the children of men, and punish or reward them according to their actions; for we hear of the *judgment of God*.

XXVII. According to this rule of justice, the Lord (who according to his absolute power might have ordered things otherways, had it seemed good in his eyes) hath made death the just desert and punishment of every the least sin: for this is his judgment, that *they which do such things are worthy of death*.

XXVIII. However, thro' the fall of Adam, all of us hath lost that knowledge of God and his will that is necessary for us to know, that we may thereby attain life eternal; yet it hath pleased the Lord, for the hemming in of the Heathen, (unto whom he would not reveal his mind more especially) at least for the rendering them the more inexcusable, to leave in them so much

much light, and such an impression of that equitable rule of justice of his, as that, notwithstanding of all their wickedness, their very consciences, and the very light of nature within them, might show them, that such and such transgressions deserveth death at the hand of God: for these wicked Heathens *knew the judgment of God, that they that do such things are worthy of death.*

XXIX. When people do accustom themselves unto sin, being given up of God unto their own corrupt hearts, no knowledge of the just judgment of God due for such and such acts of iniquity, will scar them from them; and when men, notwith-

standing they know the just desert of their carriage, will go on in sin, they hugely aggravate their guilt: for this is the aggravation of their guilt, that *they knew the judgment of God*, and yet for all that, *went on in doing those things.*

XXX. It is a heinous aggravation of guilt, when men think it not enough to commit all wickedness themselves, but become authors and abettors unto others, and do stir up and encourage others unto, and applaud them in sinning against God; for hereby is their guilt aggravated, that *they not only did those sins themselves, but took pleasure in them that did them.*

CHAPTER II.

VERSE I. *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou that judgest, dost the same things.*

THE apostle prosecuteth his purpose, anent the Gentiles, in this chapter, until the 17th verse, where he beginneth with the Jews: and farther sheweth, that they cannot be justified by their works: and this he doth by a new argument, which he prosecuteth at large, and removeth all objections which might be made by such with whom he was dealing.

The argument we may conceive to be this: If so be such among the Gentiles that seemed most righteous, and walked most strictly, were condemned as worthy of death by their own consciences, and had their mouths stoped, so as they had no excuse to pretend, for all the shifts and pretexts they used, to put a gloss upon, and cover their sinful courses; then the Gentiles cannot be justified by their works before God. But so it is that the best and strictest among the Gentiles had their

mouths stoped, and were made inexcusable, so as their own consciences might have condemned them as worthy of death; therefore they in no ways can be justified by their works. The major proposition is unquestionable, and needed no probation: And as to the assumption, he confirmeth it in this first verse. He is speaking of the strictest sort among them, such as were judging, reprehending, checking, and finding fault with others for their wickedness; and such, he says, were without excuse, and did condemn themselves by this argument: Whoever reprove others for such faults as themselves are guilty of, do condemn themselves in so doing, and stop their own mouths. This is clear: but so it is, that thou that judgest, dost the same things for which thou reprovest others; therefore thou art guilty by thy own testimony.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Among the very Heathens, where iniquity did rage and reign, and all wickedness was committed with greediness, and was patronized and applauded, there was some who gave testimony (however they were not right themselves) against these wicked courses, and reprov'd and condemn'd such wicked livers; for there were some here that judg'd, that is, reprehended, others for their sins.

II. It is a very fallible mark, to gather from folks outward carriage toward the wicked, in reprov'ing and censuring them for their iniquities, that they have a perfect detestation thereat; for such is the strength of hypocrisy, that it will carry folk to reprove even such sins which they themselves are not free of: as here the tightest sort of Heathens reprov'd others, when themselves were also guilty.

III. However it be no sin in itself for folks to reprove sin in others, yet that will be so far from justifying of them in their courses, that, on the contrary, hereby they subscribe to their own condemnation, as just and righteous, and stop their own mouths from using any apology for themselves, seeing they continue in, and approve of, and practise that sin themselves, which they condemn in others: for here such as did judge and reprove others, did *do the same things*, and therefore *condemn'd themselves*, and were *without excuse*.

IV. It is a great aggravation of folks guilt, when they know the hazard of their doings, and see what they do deserve, and yet notwithstanding malapertly go on, and hereby their mouths are stop'd for ever; and they have no shift nor evasion, but must stop their mouths, as having nothing to apologize. This is clear from the connection of this with the last verse of the preceding chapter, held forth in the particle *therefore*. They knew the judgment of God, that they which do such things were worthy of death; and therefore they were

inexcusable which did those things which they reprov'd in others.

V. It may sufficiently convince folk of an impossibility of being justified before God by their works, to consider how the best, and such as seem to walk most circumspectly and carefully, reprov'ing others for their debordings, will be carrying affections to these same sins which they reprove in others, tho' they will not commit them openly: this is the force of the argument.

VERSES 2. 3. *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*

HERE the apostle is removing two objections, or subterfuges, under which they might have thought to have hid themselves. As, *first*, verses 2d and 3d. They might have thought that God only saw to the outside, and took no notice of the inward frame and disposition of their hearts; and that God would spare and forbear them, because they were censuring and reprov'ing others; but he answereth, *We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth*: He looketh not so much to the outside, as to truth in the inward parts; and his judgment is true *against such* (without exception) *as commit iniquity*, whether the same or the like. All which he further confirmeth, verse 3d, by proposing it as a question, implying, That it were a great absurdity once to think that they would escape God's judgment for those faults, for which, or the like, others could not escape their judgment or censure.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. One main ground whereupon hypocrites do rest, when they satisfy themselves

selves with a naked out-side form, is either atheism, or ignorance of the perfection of God's law, or both: Atheism, in imagining that God is not an all-seeing Lord, who taketh notice of, and is perfectly privy unto all the motions and stirrings of the heart, but is altogether ignorant thereof; and ignorance of the law, in imagining that it only commanded the outward man, and meddled not with the inward frame and disposition of the heart: for these hypocrites here thought that *God's judgment was not according to truth.*

II. Mens fostering thoughts of atheism in their heart, will not keep God a whit the more from considering and taking notice of those things, and judging according to those things which their atheistical thoughts would put far away from God's cognizance: for notwithstanding of their imagining the contrary, yet says he, *We are sure God's judgment is according to truth.*

III. However it be in part good, that men have an outward conformity unto the law, and in part is commendable; yet all that external fairing will not keep off the judgment of God, due for their inward pravity and hidden wickedness: for *God's judgment is according to truth, against such,* for all their feigned holiness, and external sobriety.

IV. Another pillar of hypocrisy is a groundless fancy and imagination, that God's judgments will not come near them. but they shall certainly escape the same: this is clearly intimated, verse 3d.

V. Such secure, sleeping, self-pleasing hypocrites, who will bless themselves in their own courtes, and will not be convinced of their danger, thro' God's imminent judgments, ought to be awakened and roused up sharply; wherefore the apostle useth sharpness of speech when he speaks to those, saying, *And thinkest thou, O man, that judgest them who do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God.*

VI. The most effectual way for awakening secure, sleeping hypocrites, who rest on an out-side, and satisfy themselves therewith, is to shew them, that God's eyes search, and his eye-lids try the very hearts, and the most retired motions thereof are open and naked before him; and these he regardeth more than their open professions; and that accordingly he will pass sentence; so as no man, even he that was most strict in his outward conversation, shall escape; *the righteousness of the righteous shall not save him.* All which the apostle doth here.

VII. It is the most absurd, and most unreasonable thing in the world, for any to think to escape God's judgment for such sins, or the like, for which others cannot escape their sharp censure. How strict soever men be, God is more strict: therefore does the apostle propound it as a most absurd thing, once to think to escape God's judgment.

VIII. As it is by a divine instinct that men are carried to the reprovng of some sins in others; so it shadoweth forth, tho' weakly, God's just judgment against all sin, even the least: and we may look upon others reprovng of sin as a confirmation to us, that God will be about with them, if they in the least incline to those evils which they condemn in others; for, *dost thou,* says he, *that judgest others, think to escape God's judgment, if thou do the same things.*

IX. As the consideration of the natural pravity that is in man should further our conviction of the truth of God's judgment, when we see that even they reprove and condemn vice in others; so should the consideration of our weakness and inability to stand out against God, convince us of an impossibility to escape his hand, if he enter into judgment with us: therefore says he, *Thinkest thou, O man, &c.*

VERSES 4. 5. *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering;*

suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

THere is another (or *second*) subterfuge under which they thought to have sheltered themselves, and which the apostle manifesteth to be vain. The shift is this: They thought that because they were spared and forborn, and they saw nothing of that kind whereof the apostle was speaking formerly, they could perceive nothing evidencing God's displeasure, but, on the contrary, were blessed of God with many good things; and so they might think that God approved of their courses, and was not offended thereat. The apostle foreseeing that they would make use of this shift, laboureth to convince them of the folly thereof, at large, unto the 17th verse.

In these two verses the apostle doth two things, to evince the vanity of any such shelter. *First*, He sheweth, how unreasonable and abominable it is, to gather any such conclusion from the Lord's gentle dispensations, by way of question: as if he had said, verse 4th, Is this all the use you make of God's goodness, in bestowing such temporal favours and good things upon you, and in forbearing to enter into judgment with you because of your gross wickedness, to take encouragement therefrom to commit all wickedness, and to grow the more insolent and disobedient? What, are you so brutish as not to know that God's goodness in that kind should be looked on with another eye, and under another notion; as motives and inducements to prevail with you to run in to God, who is so bountiful; and thereby declares how ready he is to embrace sinners, and how unwilling and loath to strike and destroy them? Is it not much more reasonable that God's goodness should be otherways recompensed, than be trampled

upon? Then, verse 5th, the apostle, *secondly*, sheweth, how little this use they make of God's goodness will be to their advantage, ere all be done; and how little cause they will have to boast themselves of it, by clearing, that however God spare them a while, and they be forborn, and by continuing in their wickedness, harden their hearts still the more, and are the farther from repenting and rueing what they had done, and returning to the Lord; yet they will not escape, for they shall be as sure of it as a man is of his treasure: and by their wickedness they are laying up in security that which shall in end prove their ruin, in the terrible day (which shall be a day of wrath unto the wicked) in which God shall declare, before men and angels, his righteous judgment, which now men think nothing of.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. So ready are foolish men to applaud themselves in their foolish courses, and so great ill-will have they to receive any impression, and entertain any motion that may any way tend to awaken them from their secure condition, and scar them from these abominable courses which they have formerly been taking pleasure in, that they will be building up sconces and fortresses, under which they think to shelter themselves from any thing that can be said to the contrary, and when one faileth, will betake themselves unto another, under which they suppose to ride at a lee anchor; so hard a matter is it to get secure sinners made sensible of their danger, as the apostle giveth us to know, in his hunting out these proud, self-pleasing, hypocritical Romans from hole to hole, and chasing them from one sheltering place after another.

II. Tho' men that have no desire to forsake their evil courses, but love to sleep in a sound skin, and their idol in their bosom, may fancy many props and pillars unto themselves, upon which to build their confidence, and the assurance of their acceptance, tho' they walk after the imagi-

nation

nations of their own hearts, and may present unto themselves many encouragements to continue in their ways; yet in the end they shall all prove rotten reeds of Egypt, and be hewed down: and their supposed encouragements shall be so far from proving such indeed, that, on the contrary, they shall contribute to the aggravation of their guilt before God; as we are taught by the apostle's demolishing all their fancied grounds, and shewing how that God's goodness should, in all reason, rather have moved them to repentance, than encouraged them to continue in sin.

III. So bountiful and liberal is the Lord Creator, *in whom we live, move, and have our being*, that even wicked, profane hypocrites, and such as delight in their wickedness, and are enemies to him, are participating of his goodness; general temporal favours, are even such getting from him: for God's *goodness* was extended even to such here as were despising it. And so wonderfully good is our God, and such is his native kindness, or good nature, that he is ready, and prompt, as it were, to be employed by the creatures, and to do them good; for so the word here rendered *goodness*, doth import.

IV. This benignity, and readiness to do good, in God, even to the wicked, as it kytheth in other dispensations of his toward them, so in this, that he exerciseth much patience and lenity toward them. And tho' God be so just and holy as he cannot away with sin, nor approve of the workers of iniquity; yet he will delay to punish the wicked, and restrain his anger, so as not to punish iniquity instantly; for his own holy ends: for here, as there is goodness in God, so is there *patience, and forbearance*.

V. As God is in himself incomprehensible, and such a well-spring of all goodness as can never be exhausted; so all the acts and expressions of his bountifulness and longanimity, considering who they are unto whom he is manifesting himself so,

even such as deserve the severity of justice, are full of riches, and invaluable worth, and ought so to be accounted of by us: for we hear not only of his goodness, and patience, and forbearance, but also of a *riches* of them.

VI. These expressions of bounty and longanimity in God towards the wicked, however they are not pledges of his favour and goodwill towards them, as they are unto his own; yet, in that they show what an one God is, and how well-worthy to be turned unto, and contain in them some ground of hope, that he will welcome such as come, they have in them a manuducency unto repentance, and if rightly improved would lead folk home to God: thus it is said, that *the goodness of God leadeth to repentance*.

VII. Such is the corruption of wicked folks, who satisfy themselves in their pernicious ways, that when, in all reason and equity, God's lenity and delaying to cut them off because of their wickedness, should make them consider how bad a requital they give God for that his sparing mercy and goodness, in continuing in their abominations, and not amending their manners and repenting; they will, upon the other hand, encourage themselves so much the more in their sins, and think the less of sin, because that God doth not speedily execute vengeance, and bless themselves in these their sinful courses, and so continue in them still: for thus they *despised God's goodness* and lenity.

VIII. When men do thus take occasion to harden themselves in their wickedness, at God's forbearance, and so turn his goodness and grace into lasciviousness, the Lord looks upon it as a heinous sin, and no less than a contemning, vilipending, and despising of his goodness, an undervaluing of his gentleness, and trampling upon his gracious and good nature: therefore Paul calleth this abuse of God's goodness, a *despising* of it.

IX. Thus to abuse and trample upon God's merciful forbearance and long-suf-

fering patience, is such a crying sin, that the very light of nature may blush and be ashamed of it, and may refuse to avow or maintain it; as is clear from the apostle's proposing this by way of question to them, *Or despisest thou, &c.*

X. The little serious consideration of God's goodness to the wicked, in forbearing to let forth his wrath upon them, and to cut them off in the very act of iniquity, as he might do in justice; and the little studying of the mind of God in those expressions, or of what document is contained in their bosom, is one main cause why they turn his grace into wantonness, and despise his goodness: for the reason why they despised his goodness, &c. was, their *not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance.*

From verse 5th OBSERVE,

I. Besides that hardness of heart which all have by nature, such as will not be reclaimed by all God's goodness and gentleness, and the reiterated expressions of his mercifulness, and acts of lenity shown to them, but grow still worse and worse, do contract an habitual hardness of heart, whereby their hearts are more obdurate and stupid: and when God's goodness hath no kindly operation upon sinners, and his gracious invitations are not yielded unto, then this hardness of heart followeth: therefore he added, *But after thy hardness.*

II. The more hardness wicked men do sinfully contract, thro' their obstinate persisting in their sinful courses, notwithstanding of the manifold expressions of God's bounty and long-suffering patience, the more do they put themselves out of a capacity of repentance, and the more averse are their hearts from this duty of turning unto God: and as naturally the heart of man cannot return unto the Lord of itself, but is altogether unable; so when this habitual hardness is contracted, the heart becometh, in a special manner, *a heart*

that cannot repent, or impenitent.

III. Howbeit wicked men may delight themselves in their wickedness, and be so far from being moved therefrom, at the serious consideration of God's tolerance and goodness, as rather to be encouraged therein; yet ere all be done it shall be dear bought; and all that sweetness and delight shall end in sourness: for they are said, *to treasure up wrath to themselves:* Wrath is the due desert and fruit of sin. And thus do they that abuse God's goodness.

IV. Tho' the wicked sons of men see not sentence against an evil work speedily executed, yet their hearts need not therefore be fully set in them to do evil, seeing their portion is reserved in a sure place, and is treasured up for them; and they may make themselves as sure of wrath and vengeance (if repentance prevent it not) as ever a man was of his treasure; for here they are said to *treasure up*; and tho' that which is treasured up be not seen at present, yet in due time it will appear, and may certainly be expected.

V. Wicked contumacious persons have no reason to blame God for what wrath he sendeth on them; or for what shall be certainly inflicted on them in the great day of reckoning, seeing it is but the fruit of their own labour: and they may rather blame themselves, as being the only procurers thereof: And at that day the Lord shall be cleared, and men shall have nothing to say, when they get but that which they have been treasuring up; therefore it is said, that *they themselves treasure up this wrath against themselves.* And seeing it is so, can they blame any but themselves for all the wrath that shall come on them? And they are said to *treasure up wrath*, in that they accumulate guilt, and treasure up sin, (and repent not) unto which necessarily wrath is annexed. As they fill up the measure of their sins, so doth God fill up the cup of his wrath.

VI. Albeit wicked rebels, in acting rebellious

bellion against their dread Sovereign, and contemning the goodness of this excellently-sweet-natured Prince, do what in them lies to rob him of his glory, ay, and to dethrone him; yet all the real ikaith and hurt that cometh thereby, falls on their own back: for here it was *to themselves* that they were *treasuring up wrath*.

VII. There is a fixed, determined day coming, in which the treasures of sin of those that have been living and delighting in sin, however they dream of no such thing, shall be opened, and all their deeds canvassed and sifted; and a period shall be put unto their *treasuring up of sin and wrath against themselves*: for it is *against the day of wrath*, this fixed day, that they are *treasuring up wrath*.

VIII. Tho' this day shall be a most joyful and pleasant day unto the godly, even the solemn day of their marriage unto the Lamb, when the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be complete; yet it shall be the doolfullest day that ever the wicked saw: for this cause it is called *the day of wrath*, for therein shall appear nothing but pure unmixed wrath unto them.

IX. Howbeit the Lord be never pacified nor reconciled to the reprobate in this life, but still hateth them, ay, and sometimes be making them to meet with sad strokes, as fruits of their folly; yet that great day of judgment is called *the day of wrath* by way of eminence, because however the Lord hath past an irrevocable decree, touching their damnation, from eternity, yet while they are in life this cannot be certainly known; and considering God's eternal dispensations, there is a possibility of escaping God's wrath; and because all the effects of God's displeasure which they meet with, on this side of time, are but as arles, in respect of the full cup of vengeance that shall then be poured forth upon them; at which time they shall drink the very dregs thereof, and shall fall and never rise again; and then no more hope of mercy.

X. Tho' now we cannot always discern betwixt the righteous and the wicked by God's external dispensations; but sometimes the wicked are spared, when the righteous suffer hard things, and are *chastened every morning*; and we be oft in the dark as to the clear discerning of God's judgments, and they are oft-times hid from our eyes; yet at that day *his judgment shall be revealed*, and made manifest; therefore is that day called, *a day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God*.

XI. At that day the wicked, tho' now they be long forborn, and it may be go out of the world without any remarkable judgment, shall not then escape; all odds shall then be made even; for *the righteous judgment of God shall then be revealed*.

XII. The consideration of this, that however God may spare long his enemies, and yet at length will come on sadly, and make up his delay by multiplying his strokes, and such shall not escape his vengeance, may be sufficient to rouse up the secure hypocrite that is believing no such thing, but rather expecting the contrary, because of God's outward favours, and his forbearing to strike them in wrath for their sins; for, for this end doth the apostle bring in this here, as the scope cleareth.

VERSE 6. *Who will render to every man according to his deeds.*

NOW when the apostle hath mentioned the day of wrath, that he might the more rouse up those secure, self-pleasing persons, that would hardly be persuaded of their evil condition and danger wherein they were lying; he insists a little upon that purpose, and holds forth the manner of God's procedure at that day: and the first thing he doth is in this verse, where he layeth down a general assertion thereanent; That God will do justice upon every man, and give every one their due at that day, none shall escape, or be hid; for he will give to every man according

ing to his works, whatsoever they have been, good or bad. A truth which we find oft-times set down in scripture, in plain terms: See Psal. lxiii. 12. Job xxxiv. 11. Jer. xxxii. 19. Matth. xvi. 27. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xxii. 12.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. Albeit now some men may think themselves above punishment, do what they please, and no censure can reach them, nor no man may safely meddle with them; and others may escape punishment from men, by some mean or other; yet at that great day of judgment which is coming, no man breathing, no not the greatest, and proudest, or powerfullest that is, shall escape trial, or shall get leave to hide himself among the crowd; *for he will render to every man.*

II. Howbeit there be many abominable wicked pranks of the wicked committed in secret, that never is made known, nor cometh under examination; and many worthy and memorable acts of the godly that humility hath covered, or forgetfulness obliterated; yet at that day none of all these shall be forgotten, but a perfect register of them shall be produced, Rev. xx. 12. --- *And the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works.* And all of them shall be sifted, and narrowly examined; *for he will render to every man according to his works.*

III. Tho' now oftentimes it go well with the wicked, and ill with the seekers of God, yet at that day there shall be a recompence given to every man according to the kind and quality of his actions, whether they be good or bad; for God *will render to every man according to his works.* And in saying so the apostle doth not intimate any meritoriousness in good works, for then should he affirm that we should be justified by works, which is point-blank contrary to his scope and drift; for he is proving that we are justified only by faith, and not by works: but that God

of his free grace is pleased to reward our well-doing and obedience, which hath no merit of a reward in themselves, being done by the help and assistance of God's grace, without which we are not able to think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 13. 1 Cor. iv. 7. and being clothed with imperfections and blemishes, Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 14. Isa. lxiv. 6. and being due debt which the creature oweth unto the Creator, and no way beneficial unto him, for we are still *unprofitable*, Luke xvii. 10. Job xxii. 2. and xxxv. 7. Psal. xvi. 2. and so carrying an infinite disproportion in them to that recompence of reward, which is therefore still a gift of God's free grace, Rom. vi. 23. *The wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

VERSES 7. 8. *To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life:*

But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation, and wrath.

AFTER he hath set down in general, that God will render to every man according to his works, he cometh to a particular explication, and ranketh all in two classes: and after he hath described every rank by itself, he sheweth what will be their recompence of reward. The first are such as have noble ends and designs, *seeking, glory, honour, and immortality*, and that *by patient continuance in well-doing*; that is, by setting themselves to a course of well-doing, and to persevere in that course, and not to break off, notwithstanding of what discouragements and impediments they can meet with, as they will meet with some, and therefore must resolve upon patience: to these shall be given, *eternal life*; even the thing they seek. The next are such as are contentious, rebellious, and stubborn, and will not yield nor submit

unto

unto the truth of God, whether revealed by nature's light, in these undenied principles, or by his word; but give themselves unto all abominations, as servants and slaves unto wickedness: the portion of such shall be *indignation and wrath*.

DOCTRINAL OBSERVATIONS.

I. However the seekers of God be accounted the basest spirited persons that are, yet of all the men in the world they are the most noble and high in their designs and projects; they forecast for nothing less than *glory, honour, and immortality*; for so are they here decyphered, and called such as *seek for glory, &c.*

II. The glory and honour which the godly are pursuing after, is not the windy applause of a world, nor the fading honours and preferments that are to be had therein; but it is glory and honour of a more enduring nature: therefore is *immortality*, added, to shew, that it was an everlasting glory and honour, and life for evermore, that they were seeking.

III. It is not mercenary, nor hireling-like, for people to be proposing glory, honour, and everlasting life unto themselves, as an end and motive of their well-doing, seeing this glory and immortality is nothing else but the full and perpetual enjoyment of God: and hereby our graces of fear, desire, carefulness, diligence, zeal, courage, and watchfulness, are put in exercise: and Moses did so, Heb. xi. 26. --- *He had respect unto the recompence of the reward*. Yea, and Christ, Heb. xii. 2. --- *Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame*. And seeing here the godly are described from this, that *in well-doing they seek glory, immortality, and honour*: See Rev. xxii. 14. Psal. iii. 14. 1 Tim. vi. 17. 18. 19.

IV. The only way whereby to win to the possession of this immortal glory and honour is well-doing; and it is only in that way that we can, upon just grounds, expect and look for glory, honour, and immortality. And tho' good works have no

casual efficacy or influence on our salvation, as any meritorious cause, either procuring a right to life, or the actual possession thereof, (Christ's merits being the sole procuring cause) and so are not necessary upon that score; yet are they necessary as the way carved out by infinite wisdom, in which all must walk who look for glory and immortality; or as antecedent qualifications and dispositions fitting the man that hath a right thro' Christ unto actual possession: for here it is *in well-doing* that they look for, or *seek glory, honour, and immortality*: Heb. xii. 24. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. See 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10.

V. Such is the malice of Satan against the seekers of God, that he rests not night nor day to trouble and molest them in their course, *going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. v. 8, assaulting them with strong temptations, and *fiery darts*, Ephes. vi. 16. whereby to divert them from, or discourage them in going about duty. And such is the enmity betwixt the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. that those children of Satan are still upon God's childrens tops, creating trouble and molestation to them in thier way, and persecuting them, Gal. iv. 29. *But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now*; and such is the strength of corruption within themselves, 1 Pet. ii. 11. that whoever hath a mind to live godly, that they may enjoy everlasting glory, must resolve upon trouble, and to meet with many discouragements in the way both from within and from without: for here they are said to be such as are *patient*, or *suffer patiently*, as the word is rendered, Rom. v. 3. 2 Cor. i. 16. *in well-doing*: such must expect a suffering, enduring, hard life of it: See 2 Tim. iii. 12. Theff. iii. 3.

VI. Notwithstanding of all this opposition from the hands of one or other, *whosoever*

whosoever really do mind and intend glory, honour, and immortality, must resolve to continue in well-doing unto the end: and no impediment or distraction whatsoever will be able so far to discourage the expectations of glory and everlasting happiness, as to make them faint, and give over their course of well-doing: for it is by *patient continuance in well-doing* that they get *life eternal*; (and no backslider shall ever wear the crown, Heb. x. 39.) for the word in the original tongue signifieth *perseverance*, Matth. x. 22. and xxiv. 13. as well as *patience*, or a sticking by our duty, even under the cross.

VII. However there be no intrinsical worth in mens seeking of immortal life by well-doing, so as to merit at God's hand eternal life; yet it hath pleased the Lord, for the declaration of the incomprehensibleness of his goodness, out of free grace and love, to make such a connection betwixt seeking of glory, in a constant course of well-doing, and the enjoying of everlasting life, that now whosoever shall do the one shall certainly enjoy the other: for it is said, that the great Judge, *who will render to every man according to his works*, will render to such as *seek glory, honour, and immortality*, thro' *patient continuance in well-doing, eternal life*.

VIII. Albeit the seekers of God have but a sorry life of it here-away, what with the continual onsets of Satan, the opposition that the world maketh, John xvi. 33. the restless motions and stirrings of a body of death, Rom. vii. 24. so as they are still in *fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. and must always have on their *armour*, Eph. vi. 13. and be in a posture of war, ver. 18. looking for fresh onsets, with a purpose stoutly to resist and withstand, 1 Pet. v. 9. and still meeting with sore hearts, at every occasion almost; yea, and oft troubled with the Lord's hiding of his face and frowning upon them, or for other holy ends withdrawing himself, Psal. xxx. 7. yet there is a time coming when their

mourning shall be turned into joy, and they shall have a blessed, comfortable, sweet, and every-way desirable life; and a life that shall never have an end: for here, *eternal life* is the reward of such as seek glory, and immortality, tho' put to much patience-using, and suffering: Whatever obstruction lie in their way, their noble and spiritual designs shall be attained; and that they shall not be disappointed of, and no adversary shall hold from them, or be able to keep them from.

From Verse 8th OBSERVE,

I. All mankind shall be ranked in two ranks at the great day, there shall be no more; and all that belong not to the one, shall certainly belong unto the other: for here the apostle puts them in two categories, and whoever are not among the *seekers of glory, honour, and immortality*, shall be looked on as *contentious*, and *servants of unrighteousness*: See Matth. xxv.

II. However the wicked think much good of themselves, and cannot be persuaded that they are abominable in the eyes of the Lord, and think little of their sins; yet the just Lord, who judgeth according to truth, taketh them up under another notion; and looketh upon their sins as rebellion, and upon themselves as children of rebellion and strife, who are still contending against God, both by word and deed, and displeased with the actions and statutes of the Lord. And this is indeed the very nature of the wicked; they are men that are never satisfied with any thing that God doth, but still carp, fret at, and except against it, and, in a manner, chide against God; for so are they here stiled, *contentious*, or men of contentiousness.

III. As carnal men have naturally a great antipathy against light, because it discovereth their sins and abominations, John iii. 20. and a prejudice against truth, or the law of the Lord, whatever way revealed, because it giveth check unto their abominable ways; so do they hereby vent their

their rebellious ſpirit, and declare what temper they are of, when they prove refractory and diſobedient to the light of nature, or of the word, whereby truth is maniſteſted and declared, and are unwilling to be led and guided thereby; but are given to wrangling, and contradicting the truth: for thus are they ſaid to be *diſobedient to the truth*. And this is joined with the former, *viz.* their being *contentious*, to ſhew, that by their diſobedience they evidenced their contentious ſpirit; by their ſinning againſt the light of their own conſciences, and their running over all banks, contrary to all reaſon, they ſhow by what a rebellious ſpirit they are affected.

IV. Wicked folk, poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of rebellion and contumacy; (as all of them are) as no reaſon can bind them, nor no truth have ſway upon their actions and carriage; ſo they will not think it enough to croſs their own conſcience, in leaving undone, what the light they have directeth them to do, but alſo will give themſelves to commit all wickedneſs *with greedineſs*, Eph. iv. 19. as willing ſervants unto ſin: therefore it is added, they were *obedient unto unrighteouſneſs*.

V. Albeit there be many among the wicked who ſuppoſe themſelves to be in a good condition, becauſe tho' they be not ſo zealous and forward for heaven as they ſee ſome, yet they are not ſo graceleſs and profane as many are; yet whoever they be that are not ſeeking glory, honour, and immortality, in a conſtant courſe of well-doing, are ſlaves to ſin and unrighteouſneſs. And this is indeed the ſtate of all the unregenerate; and ſuch that do not propoſe heaven to themſelves to be attained, they are the baſeſt ſlaves in the world; ſlaves to ſin and corruption: for this is given as another mark of them, that they *ſerve unrighteouſneſs*; there is no miſt betwixt the two: See Rom. vi. 16.

VI. Albeit the wicked ſhould run on in their wickedneſs without controul, and

ſhould imagine that God approveth of their courſes, becauſe of outward proſperity and bleſſings, which God beſtoweth upon them; yet in end they ſhall find the Lord to look upon them in another poſture, in *indignation and wrath*, ready to be avenged on them for all their iniquities: and this is the ſure portion of all that ſeek not glory, honour, and immortality; and this they may expect who ſerve unrighteouſneſs, when the great day of the Lord cometh: for God, that will *give to every man according to his works*, will render to ſuch, *wrath and indignation*.

VERSES 9. 10. 11. *Tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile.*

But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile.

For there is no reſpect of perſons with God.

AS if all this had not been ſufficient to have convinced them of the truth of what he was ſaying, anent the reward that ſhould be given, both to ſuch as had great things before their eyes, and to ſuch as were contentious, the apoſtle cometh over it again; and, firſt, ſheweth, that ſuch as were contentious, whom here he calleth *doers of evil*, ſhould meet with *tribulation* (or pinching trouble and affliction, for the word in the original is a general, comprehending any affliction or trouble that preſſeth, or pincheth) and *anguish*; whereby he would ſignify, that they ſhould be ſo pinched and ſtrained with God's hand upon their heads, as they ſhould not know what hand to turn to: And this affliction and anguiſh ſhould not only ſeize upon their bodies, but upon their ſouls; and that of every one, be they Jew or Gentile, without exception; yea, the Jew ſhould be ſo far from being excused, that they ſhould rather get the *firſt* ſtroke. And, upon the other hand,

H

ſuch

such as are *well-doers*, of what rank or condition soever they be, they should have *glory, and honour, and peace*. And the ground of all this is given, verse 11th, *for the Lord respecteth no man's person*.

From Verse 9th OBSERVE,

I. So strong is the delusion under which poor souls are kept captive, that they cannot easily be gotten convinced of any hazard or danger into which they are, by reason of their sins, but are ready to bless themselves in their sinful courses; for once telling those people, that indignation and wrath was the sure portion of all evil doers, will not suffice, but the apostle must come over it again, and say, that *tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul of man that doth evil*.

II. Albeit men love not to dwell upon the thoughts of God's anger as their due, nor tremble at the threatnings, but trust at God's displeasure; yet his anger shall have sad effects upon the ungodly, and thereby will they be made most sensible of God's indignation, as their due: therefore doth the apostle add, *tribulation and anguish*, as effects of the Lord's indignation and wrath.

III. Tho' now the wicked enjoy prosperity, notwithstanding that they be walking still according to their own imaginations, and running at random in their wicked courses; yet ere all be done they shall meet with sore affliction, that shall press them sore, and break them; and this all the wicked shall meet with, soon or late: and they may expect to be otherways hemmed in, when the wrath of God, like a millstone, shall be pressing them down to the bottomless pit; for *tribulation*, or sore pressing and griping affliction, shall be the portion of the wicked.

IV. Wicked men may now feed themselves with the vain imaginations and thoughts of escaping God's hand, and getting from under the reach of his justice, but it shall be found otherways; when

God's wrath shall kindle against them, they shall not escape, but shall be reduced to such straits, and so sore oppressed on all hands, as they shall not know what hand to turn them to; they shall be utterly non-plus'd when *anguish* shall seize upon them.

V. Tho' among the wicked there be some who have not wrought so much iniquity as others, and who upon this score may imagine exemption, and promise good to themselves; yet fools shall find that it is another thing to have to do with God than with man; for God's justice striketh impartially against all and every evil-doer, whether his evil deeds have been few or many; if he be one of these, he shall meet with indignation and wrath; for, says the apostle, *indignation and wrath shall be upon every soul that doth evil*.

VI. It is the constant exercise and employment of the wicked to be perpetrating wickedness; and they think it not enough to be putting their hands to an ill turn, but they must continue in that work, until they have finished and perfected the wicked work which they have begun: for they are here called *doers*, or workers out, finishers, and perfecters of *wickedness*: They set about it accurately, and with great care and diligence, continuing still, until they think to perfect the work.

VII. As the soul is mainly active in plotting and contriving wickedness, and useth the body as its instrument; so the just Lord will execute his judgment upon it: and tho' all the punishment that men can inflict can only reach the body, yet God can reach the soul and spirit of man, as easily as the body; and it is the height of misery when God's wrath is poured upon the soul: therefore says he, *Indignation and wrath, and tribulation and anguish shall be upon the soul*: And this is made the last and saddest stroke, which God will inflict at the great day.

VIII. Privileges conferred upon a people who abuse them, and become, notwithstanding

standing, practitioners of wickedness, will be so far from exceeding them, and securing them from the hand of justice, that, on the contrary, they will make their strokes the sadder; and such may be sure not to escape, escape who will: for it is *to the Jew*, (a privileged people) if an evil doer, *first*; justice shall, as it were, begin at them.

IX. Such upon whom it hath pleased God not to vouchsafe so much favour as upon others, nor to honour with so many privileges as others, here-away, will nevertheless be judged and sentenced at the great day, according to their evil deeds: God's dispensing towards them in this world, will not prove a scone in the day of wrath; for then *the Gentiles* (a people not so privileged as the Jews) will meet with *tribulation and anguish*, if they be found evil-doers, in the day of reckoning.

From Verse 10th OBSERVE,

I. As the punishment is great which God will inflict upon the wicked, and cannot be soon expressed, but many words must be used to set it out; so, upon the other hand, is the reward great and unspeakable, which the Lord will bestow upon his own; and so great is it, that it cannot be expressed in one word, but the apostle maketh use of three, to set it out.

II. Howbeit the godly be put to many hardships, and have oft sad dispensations to encounter with, so long as they are here away: yet they are not much to be pitied, seeing there is no less than glory provided for them, even that by which God is stiled, being called *the God of glory*, Acts ii. 7. and by which they become portioners with Christ Jesus, John xvii. 22. They shall shine in splendour, in majesty, and in excellency, and that for ever; and therefore it is said to be *eternal*, 2 Tim. ii. 10. not *fading*, 1 Pet. v. 4.

III. Tho' the godly be oftentimes low in the estimation of the men of this world, and in little or no account; yet the Lord

carrieth a great respect to them, and in end shall advance them to great dignity and preferment, when they shall be openly acknowledged by him, and brought into his glorious habitation, as vessels of honour, and put in possession of the crown of glory, and set upon the throne with Jesus Christ; for they shall have *honour* also.

IV. Albeit the children of God have sad times of affliction and trouble, from the world, and corruption within themselves, still keeping them in hot-water, and in exercise; yet in Christ they *have peace*, John xvi. 33. even then; and right to that *peace of God which passeth all understanding*, Phil. iv. 7.; and *being justified, they have peace with God*, Rom. v. 1. in Christ who is their *peace*, Eph. ii. 14. And, moreover, the Lord, who is called *the God of peace*, Rom. xv. 33. and xvi. 20. Phil. iv. 9. 1 Thess. v. 23. Heb. xiii. 20. will *bless them with peace*, Psal. xxix. 11. and make their *peace as a river*, Isa. xlvi. 18. and however it go with them for a while, yet their *end shall be peace*, Psal. xxxvii. 37. and when they shall lay down their heads in peace, they shall be put in possession of peace, yea, perfect peace, for they shall be far beyond the reach of trouble from Satan, corruption, and the world, because they *shall enter into peace*, Isa. lvii. 2. *Peace* is added.

V. Albeit the godly have still a body of death within them, wherethrough they oft transgress God's law, and do that which they like not, and any good they do is but maim, and not perfect; yet the Lord looketh upon them as doers, workers, practitioners of good, and negotiators thereabout. And this is a true mark of a godly man, that he is one whose work and occupation is about good, tho' he can never win to be perfect in it: and all such who are making conscience of this trade, may be sure to enjoy honour and peace: All which the apostle teacheth here, while he says, that *glory, honour, and peace shall be to every one that doth good*.

VI. Tho' the Lord bestow upon his own, many privileges, favours, and good things, even on this side of time; yet that will be so far from being all which they will receive, that it will prove an inlet to more; for *glory, &c. is to the well-doing Jew first.*

VII. Tho' a privileged people, or a people enjoying more of the ordinances of God than others, and so lying nearer him, have a fair advantage; yet it is not to such only, to whom the Lord bestoweth glory, &c. for the *Gentiles* also, if well-doers, as well as the *Jews*, are made partakers thereof: *And also to the Gentile.*

From Verse 11th OBSERVE,

I. It is very ordinary for folks to imagine, that God will cast an eye upon them, and carry a respect unto them because of any privilege, gift, or endowment, or temporal blessing, or the like, which they have beyond others; and that he will shew favour unto them in the day of reckoning because of these: for here the apostle says, that *God respecteth no man's person*, whereas he said as much before, in saying, that God would *render to every man according to his works*: once will not serve the turn.

II. The Lord Jehovah is not one that much regardeth external advantages, or whatever carnal men use to dote on; he is not swayed by these in any of his actions toward the children of men; he is not as man, nor seeth not as he doth; *he is no respecter of persons.*

III. The right consideration of this, that God is not moved with folks outward advantages and enjoyments, may sufficiently convince folk, that in judgment the Lord will not consider whether the man be rich or poor, noble or ignoble, wise or foolish, Jew, barbarian or Grecian, unless it be to aggravate his guilt, or take notice of any such externals, but will distribute righteously, according to justice: therefore is this given as a reason why there shall be no difference betwixt Jew and Gentile,

as to their reward or punishment in the day of reckoning. *for there is no respect of persons with God*: See Col. iii. 25.

VERSES 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. *For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law:*

(For not the bearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.)

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.)

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

THE apostle having shown, how just and righteous the Lord is in his judgment, and how impartially he will proceed in judgment against all persons, of all qualities and conditions, in the day of judgment, he cleareth and confirmeth it a little farther in these verses, both as to the Jews, and to the Gentiles; and, withal, looseth what objections to the contrary might be made by either Jew or Gentile: and therefore he sheweth, that *in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*, verse 16th. (which must be conjoined to verse 12th, the rest being couched in by way of a parenthesis, that so the sentence may be complete) neither Jew nor Gentile shall be excused; but if they shall be found sinners, however otherways their condition be unlike, in that the Jews have the law of Moses written wherein the mind of the Lord is clearly unfolded to them, and their duties distinctly laid out; and the Gentiles are without an

such written law, they shall be both alike in this, that they shall be judged and condemned, the Jew, *viz.* according to the written law, but the Gentile not, but according to another law, whereof he speaks afterward. After this the apostle, verse 13th, answereth the objection which the Jews might propose; they might say, You do us wrong in putting us into the same category with the Gentiles, seeing we have the law of Moses, and hear it daily, which they want. To this he answereth, That this will not avail, or cause God think more of them than of other Gentile sinners, though it may move men to do so; for whosoever will expect that God will approve of them more than of others, for the law's sake, must not be *bearers* only, but *doers of the law*. Then, in the next place, he answereth what might be objected by the Gentiles, who might say, It were not equiry to punish us so as the Jews, seeing we have not had the means of knowledge that they have had; they had the written law, which we have not had. To this the apostle answereth likewise, verses 14. 15, and saith, That this will not be a sufficient ground for them to expect exemption upon; because tho' they have not a written law, yet are they not altogether without a law. And this he cleareth, by shewing, that they have some draughts of the law of nature (which is not totally and wholly obliterated) whereby they take up some principles of equity and common reason, and are able to deduce conclusions therefrom, tending to practice; this is *the work of the law written in their hearts*. Now, this the apostle makes good by these grounds: 1. Because by nature they do concur with the law, by practising even some of those things which the written law requireth, and by making precepts enjoining what was commanded in the written law; and thus they are *a law unto themselves*. 2. Because they have a conscience within them which is privy to all their carriage, and doth content unto, or

dissent from their actions, according as they are conform or dissonant unto these common notions of equity and justice, which are written in their hearts.

From Verse 12th OBSERVE,

I. It seemeth good in the eyes of the only wise Lord, who doth all things according to *the good pleasure of his own will*, Eph. i. 11. to reveal his mind more particularly and plainly to some than to others, the more to shew his sovereignty over all nations whatsoever, and his infinite wisdom in bringing about his own holy ends, to his own glory, in so doing: for there is here some who are said to be *without a law*; that is, not without a law simply, but without the written law of Moses, wherein the mind of the Lord was revealed more fully and clearly.

II. Tho' the sin of such as live under greater light, and clearer discoveries of God's mind, be the greater, because of those clear manifestations of God's will; yet the ignorance (even tho' invincible) of that law, wherein the Lord doth clearly and perspicuously hold forth his mind, doth not wholly excuse men, and exempt them from guilt, so as they should be out of a capacity of sinning against God, however sin be the transgression of a law: for here there is some without a law, (*viz.* written) and yet are sinners; *For as many as have sinned without a law.*

III. Death is the wages of sin, be it committed against a clearly revealed law, or against a law that is more dark, and whereby the Lord's mind is more obscurely and not so fully held forth; so just and righteous is God: for here it is said, that even *such as sinned without a law should perish*.

IV. At the great day, when God shall be judging all flesh according to law, he will not judge the Gentiles who never saw the law of Moses by it, but solely by the law of nature; for *they shall perish without (Moses's) law*.

V. It is not more light and more clear

discoveries of God's mind, or more means whereby the knowledge of God's mind may be attained, that will keep folks from sinning against God: So unwilling are we by nature to obey God, that convictions of our duty will not be sufficient to cause us run the way of God's commandments; for here we hear of some who *sinned in the law*, or under the law of Moses.

VI. Tho' none shall escape the trial of God at the great day, but all and every one shall be particularly examined, yet such on whom the Lord hath bestowed more means of knowledge, and unto whom he hath revealed his mind more clearly and distinctly, and written his law more fully, and in more legible letters, will be examined by a more narrow rule than others; and they judged according unto all those advantages which they have had beyond others: for such as *sinned in the law*, *shall be judged by the law*.

VII. Whenas the Lord will thus judge every one according to the rule he hath given them to walk by, and the means which they have had of attaining unto the knowledge of his will, and not according to their outward condition, sex or age, or any thing of that kind, it doth abundantly prove God to be no acceptor of persons in the day of reckoning; for this verse is brought in to confirm the former.

From Verse 13th OBSERVE,

I. That ordinarily men are so far from looking upon their being within the visible church, and blessed of God with ordinances, and more means of knowledge than others, as a strong engagement on them to yield more hearty obedience unto his commands, that they make a sconce thereof under which they think to shelter themselves in the day of wrath, and ward off the stroke of justice, and expect exemption from wrath; for they thought that all should have been right, because they *had the law*, and were *bearers* thereof, though they never minded obedience.

II. Men are ready to imagine a more

easy way whereby to stand justified at the bar of God's tribunal, and expect absolution, than ever God carved out: and as men should look diligently that their imaginations thus deceive them not, and that they stand on sure grounds; so the faithful servants of God should be careful to undeceive people, and to discover the vanity of their imaginations, and shew the true grounds on which a man must stand justified before God in the great day: therefore doth Paul shew, that not *the bearing of the law*, (which they imagined to be sufficient) but *doing* was required: Luke xiii. 26. *Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.*

III. We should not value so much what we are before men, or in mens account, as what we are before God, and in his estimation: therefore the apostle speaks of justification *before God*.

IV. Whoever doth expect justification in and thro' the law, must not think it enough that they have it made known to them, and they carry themselves externally respectfully thereto, and are hearers of it, but they must resolve to yield perfect obedience thereto; for the law says, *Cursed is every one that abideth not in all that is written therein to do it*, Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10. and *whosoever offendeth in one point is guilty of all*, James ii. 10. Therefore saith he, not *the bearers of the law*, but the *doers of the law shall be justified*: not as if this were the only way to be justified, for *by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified*, Rom. iii. 20. and there is no way to be justified but *by faith in the blood of Christ*, Rom. iii. 24. 25. 28. Gal. ii. 20. nor as if he were exhorting them to expect justification by the doing of the law, but rather dissuading them from it, and pressing them to take another way, seeing it is impossible to be justified by the law, because whoever would be so justified, must resolve to keep it perfectly, which is impossible to be done.

From

From Verses 14. 15. OBSERVE,

I. Tho' many are ready to shelter themselves under their ignorance, and to think that because they have not the means of knowledge which others have, therefore they shall be excused; yet in that day of reckoning this shall be found vain and useless: and though by this means they think to rub the fault off themselves on God, yet they will meet with a disappointment: For this is the pretext the Gentiles had, and which the apostle is here removing, by shewing, That tho' they were ignorant of the written law, as not having it communicated to them, yet that would not avail.

II. When men once imagine to shelter themselves under their ignorance, thro' want of the means of knowledge, then tho' every mean whereby the Lord manifesteth any thing of his mind, be of great price, yet they are ready to undervalue, and cast behind their back, any serious consideration of such means, and think nothing of them, in comparison of other means; for the Gentiles, tho' they had the law of nature, (a mean whereby God manifesteth something of his mind) yet that is quite out of mind now, when they think to secure themselves from wrath, under the pretext of ignorance, through the want of a written law.

III. Beside the law of Moses, written on tables of stone, whereby the Lord did communicate his mind, touching mens carriage, in a more full, distinct, and clear manner, to the people of the Jews, than before to other people and tongues, there is a law of nature, common both to Jews and Gentiles, whereby the Lord revealeth his mind, in some measure, less or more; for it is said, that *by nature they did those things contained in the law.*

IV. This light of nature, tho' it be but dim, shall be a sufficient ground of conviction of guilt, even in those who never heard of the moral law, in the day that God shall reckon with them; and tho'

they never had the law written by Moses, directing their walk, as a rule, yet they shall be found not to have been altogether without a law, having had the light of nature to direct them some manner of way: for upon this ground the apostle looseth the scruple of the Gentiles, who might expect exemption, because they had not the written law of Moses, by saying, That they had the law of nature for a law, and thereby became *a law unto themselves.*

V. This light and law of nature, tho' it be not so clear, so full, nor so exact as the written law, and doth not hold forth the mind of God so distinctly as that doth; yet it agreeth with the moral law in substantial things which it holdeth forth, so as men, following the direction thereof, may do many things for substance (tho' not well, neither as to the principle from which, nor end to which) conform to the moral law; for it is said, the *Gentiles did by nature the things contained in the law.*

VI. As other laws whereby God revealeth his mind to people, have a power and office to direct men to know God's mind, and to command them to obedience; so this light of nature in all men and women, hath this efficacy and power, to clear and hold forth what is wrong, what right; what is honest, what dishonest, &c. and therefore it is said to have a work or office, *the work of the law.*

VII. The efficacy and influence of this law upon folks carriage, in directing them, and constraining them to obedience, is a thing that can hardly be rooted out of the heart of the natural man, however he may do much to weaken its power, by making a trade of sin; therefore it is said to be written in their heart, *they shew the work of the law written in their hearts.*

VIII. This efficacy of the light of nature, as a law, is clear and manifest by the carriage of mere natural men, and Heathens, without all knowledge of the written law, enacting laws for virtue, and against vice, rewarding well-doers, and punishing

nothing evil-doers; and by the practice of men, according to the common natural grounds of equity and justice; for their *doing the things contained in the law, and becoming a law unto themselves*, did evidence *the work of the law written in their hearts*.

IX. The Lord hath endowed every man, whether, meerly natural or christian, Jew or Gentile, with a conscience, to the end he may be acknowledged sovereign Lord and Ruler over all mankind, and may not leave rational creatures as beasts, but under his deputy and viceroy, which may put to duty, after it hath been held forth, and scar from vice; and may have something within themselves that may concur with him, in judging and sentencing them for their iniquities; for these Gentiles are said to have *a conscience*, or a power (or something of that kind) in a man's soul, deputed by the great God, as his vicegerent, acting for God according as it receiveth instruction and orders from him, taking knowledge of things together with God's knowledge; something beside a man's self, taking notice both of God's law, and of the man's carriage, compared therewith.

X. Tho' the very name of conscience doth imply knowledge and light, (as being one knowledge with another or anothers) and tho' it be grounded upon knowledge as to its regular actings, (so as if the mind be not clearly and distinctly informed, the conscience must accordingly miscarry in its office) yet it is not one and the self-same thing with a man's light and understanding, but some power, faculty, or act in the soul, distinct from that illumination and light in the mind and understanding; for beside the light which they had whereby they knew what was right, and what was wrong, and so became a law unto themselves; they had a *conscience* (distinct) *bearing witness*.

XI. This conscience within every man is particularly acquainted with, and taketh

notice of, the man's commissions or omissions, and is privy unto all his carriage, as his thoughts, words, and actions; and can bear witness and give true testimony of them, whether done or omitted, and whether done in a right manner, and completely, or not: therefore it is said to *bear them witness*. Whatever they did, of whatever nature, conscience had something to say of it, and a testimony to give of it, *viz.* whether it was right or wrong, well or ill done, both as to the matter, and as to the form.

XII. This vicegerent of God is not only a witness of all our actions whatsoever, but also is diversely commoved and affected, according as the actions which it knoweth, and beareth witness unto, are good or evil; and so sideth with God and his law, and acteth under him, and is not still in one and the same posture, but exchangeth its disposition according unto the change in mens actions: therefore it is said sometimes to *accuse* a man, sometimes to *apologize* and speak for a man, and take his defence, sometimes to befriend him, and sometimes not, it *accuseth* or *excuseth*, at diverse occasions.

XIII. This deputy can moreover act God's part as Judge, and so as under-judge in name of its Master; and by virtue of power and authority from him, can set itself upon the bench, and give out sentence of absolution or condemnation, according as the man, or his particular actions, are conformable unto the law of the Lord, or not; and so it can reach the man and effect him, as his actions are good or bad; for it *accuseth* and *excuseth* the man, and this in order to a sentence.

XIV. All these actings of conscience in reference to mens carriage, in particular, or estate in general, absolving or condemning, approving or disapproving, accusing or excusing, or the like, are not blind acts, but flowing from reason, and conscience walking according to its warrant, the word of God, and right information, laying

laying down the law of the Lord as the rule, and examining impartially the man's actions, whether they be conform unto the law, or not; and so comparing them to it, and accordingly concluding of the man, or his actions; and thus it proceedeth according to right reason: and therefore it is said, *their thoughts*, or ratiocinations, did *accuse or excuse*, that is. their consciences did accuse or excuse, by such thoughts as are made by reasoning and discepration, according to the judgment of equity and reason; such thoughts as flow from counsel and deliberation, which sometimes the word rendered *thoughts* signifieth.

XV. It is but folly for people to pretend ignorance of God's mind, and think thereby to escape judgment at God's hand, when they have a conscience within them bearing them witness, and accusing or excusing; for where-ever this conscience, thus acting, is, there, of necessity, must be a law, unto which actions must be considered as consonant, or dissonant, and a law known; for otherways the conscience would not bear witness, or testify, that a man's actions were conform or not conform unto the law, and so could not accuse or excuse: for this is the force of the next argument of Paul's; they wanted not a law, because they had *a conscience bearing them witness, and accusing or excusing*.

From Verse 16th OBSERVE,

I. It will be very useful and advantageous both for one and other, to be serious and often upon the thoughts of the great day of judgment; and it is the duty both of the godly and wicked to be oftener thinking upon this day: therefore doth the apostle so often make mention of it in writing to these Romans.

II. Howbeit many should conclude in their minds with those scoffers mentioned by Peter, 2 Epist. iii. 3. 4. that because all things continue as they were since the

creation, therefore this day of judgment will not come; yet let wicked men put this day as far off as they please, there is a certain day to come, a day, tho' unknown to man, yet certain and determined by God: Acts xvii. 31. *Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.*—See 2 Pet. ii. 9.

III. At that day, tho' now wicked folk commit many acts of iniquity in the dark, which cannot be made known to men on earth, and so escape punishment at the hands of men, and they lurk all that time in the dark, and are not discovered to be what they are, and let their hearts and thoughts feed on many unlawful things, which others see not, and therefore give out themselves to be what they are not; yet all those shall be made plain and visible; all their intentions and projects which never have been discovered; all their hypocrisies which have been masked with fair colours; and all their actions, which have been committed in secret, shall then appear in open view: And as the secret pranks of the wicked shall be made known at that day; so shall also the secret, unseen sincerity and straightness of heart of the suspected seekers of God, and all their good actions done in secret, and not to be seen of men, be openly declared, and they rewarded openly therefore; Matth. vi. 4. 18. *That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly. That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* For it is a day in which the secrets of men shall be judged: See 1 Cor. iv. 5. Eccles. xx. 14.

IV. Tho' carnal men may now tush at all this, and think it impossible that all that ever breathed shall appear before God; and that every one, even the least, of their sinful acts, committed in secret, shall be taken notice of, and they judged accord-

accordingly; and may imagine a world of inconveniencies, to foster their unbelief; yet all these foolish mists and cogitations may vanish at the serious consideration of this, that they shall not have mere man to be their judge at that day, but God, in whose sight there is no creature but is manifest, and unto whose eyes all things are naked and open, Heb. iv. 13. for it is God that will judge at that day, and his stile is *the searcher of hearts*, Jer. xvii. 10.

V. As all power is given unto Christ both in heaven and in earth, Matth. xxviii. 18. so in particular bath the Father committed all judgment unto his Son, even as God-man, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, John v. 22. 23. that that day may be the more joyful unto believers, when they see their best friend sitting on the bench, and the more terrible unto the wicked who are his sworn enemies; for the judgment shall be managed by Jesus Christ, Acts x. 42. *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.* See Acts xvii. 31. Rom xiv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10.

VI. Albeit this day of judgment be dreadful and terrible unto the wicked; who then shall be shiftless, Rev. vi. 15. 16. 17. yet it is a most glad and joyful day unto the godly, and sweet news in itself, and a piece of the gospel and glad tidings; for then all the children shall be fully victorious over all their enemies, even death which is the last; and then shall the believer's husband be exalted highly as King in his kingly office; and then shall be the fulness and completement of the sweet promises; and then shall *the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord*, and the time come of *restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets*, Acts iii. 19. 21. therefore is it here said, *according to the gospel*; and believers ought to look upon it as a gospel truth, full of sweetness and

gospel consolation, and love his appearing, when all the saints shall wear crowns, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

VII. So little ashamed should the ministers of the gospel be of it, Rom. i. 16. that they should glory and think much of that employment, Rom. xi. 13. such affection should they carry toward it, that it should be dear to them as their own; and they should never hear of it but their affections should warm towards it: and as they ought to be faithful in discharging their duty, so the Lord will honour them so far as to have the glad news of the gospel stiled by them, as if it were theirs, when a dispensation of it is only committed to them, 1 Cor. ix. 17. and they are but *stewards*, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and *allowed of God to be put in trust with it*, 1 Thess. ii. 4. Hence upon these grounds, or the like, doth the apostle call it *my gospel*: See Rom. xvi. 25.

VERSES 17. 18. 19. 20. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and reatest in the law, and makest thy boast of God; And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

THE apostle having at large shown how the Gentiles could not expect to be justified by works, but rather was to expect God's just judgment, because of their wickedness; he cometh now, in this second part of the chapter, and proveth the same of the Jews: and having spoken something of them, as it were by the bye, from verse 14th, and put them in one category with the Gentiles, and withal solved some of their objections, verse 13th, he cometh now and dealeth with them by them-

themselves, and followeth forth the same way he began, and sheweth, That they should be so far from being justified by their works, that because of them they should certainly expect condemnation, and that notwithstanding of all their privileges, whereof he reckoneth up seven in these verses, and cleareth this his assertion to verse 25th; and then particularly answereth an objection which they might make from circumcision, unto the end of the chapter.

The *first* privilege which he nameth, and whereof they boasted, was, that they were called *Jews*, probably from the tribe of Judah, (which, with Benjamin, did not make defection, when all the rest did, under Jeroboam, and both went under one name, and were called the kingdom of Judah) which, as more constant than the rest, so more privileged, in that the promised Messiah was to come out of it, and that most likely when dispersed, and knew not well what tribe they were of; however the name signifieth one that hath devoted himself to the true religion, who acknowledgeth and professeth the true God, and his worship, and of this they boasted; as also because they were come of that tribe, of whom the Messiah, the only Mediator betwixt God and man, was promised to come.

The *next* is, they *rested in the law*; they had the law of Moses among their hands, the oracles of God belonging unto them, which was a great privilege, Deut. iv. 8. Psal. cxlviii. 19. 20. and they thought they were so sure, thinking that was enough, that they were secure, and lived in it securely, and slept upon it, as if no more were required.

The *third* is, they *made their boast of God*; they had God confederate with them, and their God in a peculiar manner by way of covenant, and they became his *peculiar people*, Exod. xix. 5. Lev. xx. 26. Deut. xxvi. 17. 18. and this puffed them up.

The *fourth* is, and *knowest his will*;

they, having the law among their hands, attained to a more clear and distinct knowledge of God's mind.

The *fifth* is, and *approvest the things that are more excellent*, &c. They being instructed out of this law, were able to discern betwixt right and wrong, and to pass sentence in matters controverted, and put things externally in a good order; and knew what things were best, for they were catechised out of the law from their infancy.

The *sixth* is, and *art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light to them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes*. They had not only so much knowledge as was useful for themselves, but they had to impart to others, and did obtrude these things on others, *making profelytes*, Matth. xxiii. 15. and hence Christ calleth them *leaders of the blind*, Matth. xv. 14. They conceived themselves able enough to instruct others.

The *last* is, which *hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law*: They had such an idea and express image of all these truths that did ly up and down the law; they had a most conspicuous appearance of knowledge, so as they were able to instruct others; they had the external vizard or mask of knowledge of the truth.

From Verses 17. 18. OBSERVE,

I. When men grow secure because of privileges wherewith they are blessed of God, it is a hard matter to get such roused up and awakened, and brought to some thorough conviction of their case and condition; therefore doth the apostle prefix this word *behold*. to stir them up the more to a serious consideration of themselves.

II. As it is a matter worthy of commendation to submit unto God externally, and make *confession with the mouth*, Rom. x. 9. so carnal men are ready to rest thereupon, as thinking it sufficient unto salvation, as these did here, in that they were

called *Jews*, and had taken on a profession.

III. Though it be a great privilege to have any relation, even external, to Christ, Rom. ix. 5. yet that will not be sufficient to carry souls to heaven; for even this, that they were Jews, and so naturally related to Christ, is casten, and will not prove sufficient to keep them from wrath.

IV. Such is the corruption of men in nature, that when the law should be used by them to discover their need of Christ, and so drive them in to him, they turn it into a resting-bed to sleep upon, supposing no more to be requisite for attaining life: for these Jews *rested on the law*; they made it a bed to sleep upon, and went no farther.

V. Tho' we ought to value the privileges of God very highly, and account ourselves much obliged to God because of them, and in particular because of his becoming a God to us, and taking us into covenant with himself; yet we should not be puffed up by them, so as to think there is none like us, and to undervalue all others, in comparison of ourselves, because of these our enjoyments: for thus did they *make their boast of God*, and gloried vauntingly of their being God's peculiar people.

VI. Folks may be externally in covenant with God, and so admitted to a higher dignity than others, and may think much of their being in such a state, and yet be far from justification, and freedom from the wrath and curse of God; for the apostle sheweth, that this privilege, among the rest, would not secure them, viz. that *they boasted of God*, or of their being in covenant with God.

VII. Tho' it be a special privilege which God confereth upon the children of men, to be in any measure admitted to know his will, and to be acquainted with his mind, yet the particular and punctual knowledge thereof will not be enough to save men from the wrath of God, when obedience is not yielded thereunto, but

will prove an aggravation of their guilt, and make their punishment the greater, Luke xii. 47. for this, that *they knew his will*, is one of the privileges, notwithstanding whereof they might expect condemnation because of their sins.

VIII. Men may have much insight in the law of God, even so much as that they may be able to dive deep into, and search out truth from falsehood, and to know what is most agreeable unto the will of God, and may prefer that, and yet be but naughty when all this is done; for these here could, after search, *approve things that are more excellent*, and on this they rested, supposing it abundance.

IX. Catechising, as it is an ancient and divine way of instructing the ignorant, and hath been still made use of for that end, Deut. vi. 7. so it is yet useful and necessary for attaining unto the right knowledge of the law, so as to be able to take up God's mind distinctly, and approve of the best and more excellent things; for the way how they attained to this knowledge of his will was thro' *being instructed*, or catechised, *out of the law*.

From Verses 19. 20. OBSERVE,

I. Woful and miserable is the state and condition of poor unconverted souls; they are blind, not seeing nor discerning their danger, nor a way to escape God's wrath and eternal vengeance; and they are living in gross *darkness*, and in the region *and shadow of death*, Isa. ix. 2. they are foolish and witless, not hearkening unto the counsel of the Lord, nor seeking for a way of recovery, but as silly children carelessly lying still in their condition; for such, of whom those whom the apostle is now taxing were teachers, are here called *blind* and dwellers in *darkness*. *foolish*, and *babe*.

II. This lamentable and deplorable case of poor sinners, holdeth forth a necessity of instructors; and the stile that such go here and elsewhere, sheweth, of what concernment the being of such officers in the

church

church are to the church; and the necessary case of poor souls calleth for their help, and what a doleful case they would be in without them; for folks naturally are blind, and so have need of guides; they are in darkness, and so have need of light; they are foolish, and so have need of some to instruct them; and are children, and have need of schoolmasters; and so are those stated here.

III. As these stiles given to such as are in place in the church, do hold forth a distinct office peculiar to some, and not common to every one, (seeing some are instructed, and some to be instructed) so as none but they may lawfully exercise the same; so do they point out obedience and willing subjection unto, due reverence and respect to, such as are in place, to be given by such as are under them, as the blind will do unto their leaders, and scholars to their masters, and instructed to their instructors.

IV. As the work of the ministry is a work of great weight and moment; so it becometh all who undertake it, to be well qualified and fitted for the same, and to have endowments, whereby they may be capacitated to discharge that weighty employment aright: hence they are called guides, who must have eyes to see, and to lead the blind; lights, who must shine forth in doctrine and conversation in the midst of a crooked generation, as burning and shining lights, John v. 35. instructors, who must know the truth, and be able to teach it to others; and skilful schoolmasters, able to educate and train up young ones by doctrine and discipline.

V. Tho' this employment be weighty in itself, and of dangerous consequence unto such as are in it, when they prove negligent, or unfit for the discharge thereof, can no less than the blood of souls, Ezek.

18. yet there are many who run under this load, and have not shoulders fit for such a stress; many who take this office upon them and are not fitted nor qualified therefore; and not only so, but who also

are puffed up with a vain conceit of their being the only able qualified men for the place: for thus were these Jews *persuading themselves* that they were leaders, and lights, &c. when yet they had not good ground to walk on.

VI. It is ordinary for such as have attained unto some measure of knowledge, but not unto the sanctified use thereof, to be puffed up thereby, so as to think meanly of all others in comparison of themselves; therefore these teachers, here, are said to think so much of themselves as to account others but babes and infants, yea, fools in knowledge, in comparison of themselves; for the apostle supposeth and granteth them to be teachers, &c. and useth their own language, whereby they vilified others, and saith, they were *instructors of the foolish, and teachers of babes*, or of such as they accounted so.

VII. It is a hard and a difficult matter for men and women to attain unto some more than an ordinary measure of knowledge in the ways of God, and not to rest and settle thereupon, as tho' no more were necessary for the saving them from the curse of a sin-revenging God; for this proved a resting-stone to these Jews with whom the apostle is contending now, viz. that they were *persuaded they were teachers of others, a light to such as were in darkness*, &c.

VIII. So strait is the way to heaven, and so hard a matter is it to enter in, that many may take upon them to be guides to others, and instructors of the ignorant, and to hold forth the way unto them, and yet miss it themselves, and never be able to enter in: all that enter in there must shake off themselves all conceit of the knowledge they have, (how eminent soever they be in it) and resolve to disclaim it, as to any trusting to it, or of expecting of freedom from wrath and guilt from it: for these teachers here, who were confident they were light to such as were in darkness, &c. were but graceless for all that, and far from being justified by faith in Christ,

Christ, and never would have been justified so long as they relied upon their superlative (in their own account) knowledge.

IX. Tho' men may conceive an idea, and an expresse image of truths manifested to them, so as they may be able to hold forth truth unto others clearly, yet as all that will not avail in the day of reckoning, so it may be but a fair out-side frame and fashion, and such as never yet sank down into their hearts, and made a change there, but still abode in the brain, and was only a vizard of knowledge and of truth, all not being gold that glistereth; for all the fair shew and flourish which they had was but *a form of knowledge, and of the truth of the law.*

VERSES 21. 22. 23. 24. *Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?*

Thou that sayst a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God.

For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, through you, as it is written.

AFTER the apostle hath reckoned up their privileges, now he cometh to shew, how, notwithstanding of these, they could not expect to be justified by their works; and he giveth this ground and reason for it: Because they were transgressors of the law, and thereby dishonourers of God. And this he makes good several ways: (and withal aggravateth it by shewing how they did teach others otherwise, and so their own mouths condemned them. And, the more to win in upon them, and to waken them, he proposeth all to themselves, as if their own consciences could

not but join with him against them.)
1st, In general; *Thou therefore which teachest another, dost thou not teach thyself?* As if he had said, If you be such as you would let the world know you are, how comes it to pass that you set not about those duties you press upon others? How comes it, that when you advise others to well, you in the mean time neglect yourselves? Why do you not make your lives examples to those upon whom you press holiness? Then, *2dly*, he instanteth in three particulars: The *first* is *theft*; whereby is meant, all subtle and sinister ways and practices tending to the damnifying of others in their outward estate; of this they were guilty, howbeit they pressed the contrary on others. The *second* is *adultery*; whereby is meant, all wronging of the chastity of others, in heart, expressions, or outward actions. The *third* is, they did commit *sacrilege*, either in robbing God of his glory, and taking from him what is his, or in wronging or taking away any thing dedicated and given away to a pious use, for the promoting of God's service; and this is aggravated particularly from this, that they would seem so zealous of God's glory, and so devout, as not to regard idols, but to abhor them, and yet they made no scruple to commit sacrilege: All which the apostle aggravateth farther, verse 23d, in that, *1st*, They went over all bonds and marches, notwithstanding of the great profession they made, and respect they seemed to have had to the law; they *made their boast of the law*, and yet that would not keep them from breaking it. *2dly*, Their sins did strike directly against God and his honour, and by their transgressions they laboured to disgrace him, whose name be blessed for ever. And this he farther maketh out, by shewing, moreover, how they gave occasion by their wicked deeds to Heathens to speak evil of God, as their forefathers did before them in the like cases, which are mentioned in scripture, *viz. Isa. lii.*
 Ezel

Ezek. xxxvi. 20. 22. where the Jews, being in captivity for their iniquities, gave ground to their enemies to speak evil of God; as also by their evil deportment in the time of their captivity: therefore says he, *as it is written*; where the apostle is citing a testimony for confirmation, shewing, how fitly that which was spoken of their forefathers might be applied to them, and possibly is citing Isa. lii. 5. as it is rendered by the Septuagint.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. Hypocrites, as they labour, in all their deportment, so to carry themselves as they may have a fair shew, when they have little substance, and use all means imaginable, whereby they may keep up a garb, and be esteemed somebody; so, among other means, this is one, whereby they think to deceive others, and under which they think to lurk, *viz.* their giving open testimony against iniquity, and reproving vice where they see it; for this is the vizard that the apostle is taking off their face here.

II. If there were no more to give testimony, or to bear witness against wicked livers, who cover their knavery with fair outside professions, there will be as much found even in their carriage, (how unblameable soever they labour to have it) as will stop their mouth sufficiently, and convince them of their guilt, notwithstanding of what they thought to shelter themselves under; for Paul goes no further to convince those folk, but to their own practice and deportment here.

III. Seeing it is hard to get a people that have settled on lies, and made them their refuge, and have fallen asleep upon their privileges and enjoyments, awakened, and made to see their condition clearly; therefore it is the duty of Christ's faithful servants to be dealing effectually and not to dally with them, and to bear in convictions piercingly, and to press them home upon their consciences, as Paul doth here, who puts it home to them sharply, and

says, *doest not thou teach thyself? doest thou steal?* &c. by way of question; that it may appear the more absurd and strange.

IV. As knowledge doth lay an obligation on folks to practise; so, whoever take upon them to instruct and teach others, should lay their own heart open to the truth, and they should not overlook themselves in pressing of duties, as if it was enough in them to lay heavy burdens on others, tho' they never put to one finger themselves; for this was it which is here challenged in them, they *taught others, but they did not teach themselves; they taught that others should not commit adultery or steal*, and yet they drank not in these truths themselves.

V. Folks pressing of duty upon others is so far from exeeing them from the practice of these duties, and from wrath because of guilt, in not practising them, that, on the contrary, it tendeth to aggravate and heighten their neglect, for so much doth the form of speech intimate, *thou that teachest another, doest thou not teach thyself? thou that teachest another should not steal, doest thou steal?*

VI. Many may be forward enough in reproving sin in others, and with the Pharisee, perceive a mote in their neighbour's eye, who may look over the same sin, or a greater, and not see a beam in their own; and so strong is corruption, that it can carry folk not only over the belly of light, but also light declared by testimony-bearing against those courses; for even he *that teacheth, another should not steal nor commit adultery*; (and so is convinced that it is a sin to do so; and not only so, but declareth and beareth witness against it) may be guilty of both.

VII. There are few or none so desperately wicked, but they have something within them for God; so that were they in calm blood, and unbiaised, they could not but condemn themselves for many of their practices, so crofs are they to light and reason; therefore Paul puts the question,

on, as it were, to themselves to answer; knowing, that if they would but seriously consider the matter with themselves, they could not but disapprove of their practices; therefore says he, *doſt thou ſteal? doſt thou commit adultery? doſt thou commit ſacrilege?*

VIII. It is but a falſe and failing ground for folks to build the hopes of their acceptance with God upon, that they abhor or loath at ſome one particular vice or other; for as that may flow from ſome carnal principle or other, ſo it will not ſpeak out any real change made thro' the whole man; for there may be other vices as evil or worſe reigning in him, and not ſet againſt; as here, they thought, ſince they *took a loathing at idols*, that all was right; and yet, in the mean time, *they were guilty of ſacrilege*: So that that reformation which is not complete, nor throughout the whole man, is not much to be valued.

IX. Sacrilege, or the robbing or taking away any thing dedicated to God of whatſoever kind, be it houſes, lands, rents, or ſuch like, for the maintenance of his worſhip and ſervice, is a heinous crime, and ſuch a ſin as may undermine all their confidence, which they build upon other commendable practices; therefore ſays he, *thou that abhorreſt idols, doſt thou commit ſacrilege?* this inquiry of theirs in committing ſacrilege caſts down all their laudable carriage anent idols: See Mal. iii. 8. 9. &c.

X. Folks ſhewing ſome ſeeming tenderness and reſpect unto God's glory and authority in one particular, ſhould engage them to do ſo in all reſpects, and in every particular; and will do ſo where folks tenderness floweth from a right principle, and is of a right kind, otherwiſe their ſeeming tenderness and reſpect in one particular will but ſerve to aggravate their guilt, and ſtop their mouth in the day of reckoning: Therefore ſays he, *thou that abhorreſt idols, thou that ſeemeſt to be tender of God's glo-*

ry here in that point, ſhouldeſt not thou be as tender in another, *doſt thou commit ſacrilege?* what a heinous aggravated guilt is this? canſt thou ſay any thing againſt this?

XI. Hypocrites and ſuch as are but void empty veſſels may oftentimes give the greateſt ſound, and they may ſeem to have the faireſt flouriſhes who may be but rotten at the heart, and ſuch as are, but naught may be moſt in ſhew, and in outwards; therefore theſe wicked Jews were *boiſters of the law*, they ſeemed to have ſuch a liking of the law as they made it the matter of their gloriation and rejoicing; they were ſo full of gladneſs that they had the law of God, as that they could not but expreſs the ſame in exulting and rejoicing.

XII. Mens having a ſhew and fair outside profeſſion, tho' oftentimes it may have no influence upon their carriage, that it may be ſuitable in all points; yet it layeth on a ſtrong obligation to be conform: and where there is not that conformity, and ſuitableneſs betwixt mens practices and profeſſions which ſhould be, their fair flouriſhes will be ſo far from ſaving them from the wrath and curſe of God, that, on the contrary, they will prove matter of further conviction and condemnation; ſo here, theſe *made their boaiſt of the law*, and yet were breakers of it; and this was ſo abominable, that they could not but be convinced of it themſelves, and therefore he propoſes the queſtion to them, *doſt thou break the law?*

XIII. Tho' oftentimes men make a mock at ſin, and think it a very light matter; yet the leaſt breach of God's law is a diſhonour done to God, a *deſpiſing* of him and his government, (for ſo the word is rendered, James ii. 6.) a putting of God to ſhame, ſo to ſpeak, (for ſo it is rendered, Acts v. 41.) and an *entreating of him ſhamefully*, (as we have it rendered, Luke xx. 11.) by rejeſting his yoke, and robbing him of his ſovereign dominion and ſupreme authority, and of his glory, as great law-giver, *break*

breaking of the law dishonourest thou God? saith the apostle, not as if sinners could rub any affront and disgrace upon God, who is glorious for ever, nor as if sin could any way rob God of his infinite and everlasting blessedness, but only to shew, that sinners do what in them lies to do so, by refusing to yield obedience unto his just and holy commands, and to be in subjection unto his sovereignty.

XIV. Besides the dishonour that professors do to God by themselves, when they transgress his holy laws, they dishonour him further, in that, by their sinful carriage, they open the mouths of the wicked, and give them occasion to speak evil of God; and the opprobrious, wicked, and blasphemous speeches which the carnal wicked ones do vent of God, upon the occasion of the sinful carriage and deportment of professors, will be laid to the charge of such professors, as guilty of God's dishonour in that: for this in particular is mentioned, as the way of their dishonouring God, that through them the Gentiles took occasion to speak evil of, and defame God, *for the name of God is blasphemed among the Heathen by you.*

XV. Such is the enmity against God in the hearts of wicked, profane, graceless persons, that if they can have the least ground and occasion, tho' not in God himself, but in any of his followers, or those who profess to be so, they will vent it, and labour to slander, and speak evil of God, though they should have no other ground for it, but the miscarriage of such as profess themselves to be his: so did the Heathen *blaspheme the name of God*, and all thro' them.

XVI. This sin of professors giving ground to strangers to speak evil of God, and of the wicked's venting their malice against God, upon such a ground solely, is no new fault, but an old fault; and the longer a sin be lived in, it should become the more odious unto us: therefore to this the apostle addeth, *as it is written*, where-

by he sheweth, that it was with them as with their forefathers, and that made their fault the greater.

XVII. Though graceless professors will not take it well to have their iniquities in a lively manner decyphered and laid open to life, with all the aggravating circumstances and sad consequences thereof; yet it becometh the faithful servants of Christ to be free, and charge home guilt to the full on them: for though these Jews were not like to take it well to have it laid to their charge, that they occasioned the blaspheming of God's name (as is clear from this that Paul must prove it from Scripture) yet the apostle tells them plainly, (think of it what they will) that *the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them.*

XVIII. As in fastening convictions deeply upon sinners, ministers ought to be clear, and walk upon Scripture-grounds, and make no more of folks miscarriages than Scripture warranteth; so it becometh people to sit down, and take with such convictions of guilt, when they see it warranted from the word: therefore says Paul, *as it is written*, both to clear that their sins did give such occasion, and that this, *as it is written*, was sufficient to convince them.

VERSES 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. *For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.*

Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in

the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.

IN this last part of the chapter, the apostle is answering one main objection or ground whereupon the Jews thought to have rested, and upon which they did expect justification, without faith in Christ, by the works of the law; and upon which they might have thought that the apostle did wrong them, in that he was so far from having any better hopes of them than of the blind Gentiles, that he put them all in one rank and category, and it is this; they might have said, But we have the seal of the covenant, a special testimony of God's love towards us, we are circumcised, the Gentiles are not, and so there is a clear difference betwixt our case and theirs; and seeing we are a people in covenant with God, having his badge and livery carrying about us, whereby we are distinguished from other nations, and looked upon as God's peculiar people, we are in a better condition than they, and nearer to justification, and further from condemnation.

In these verses, the apostle answereth, and taketh this out of the way, and therefore he granteth that circumcision hath some advantage with it, but it is to such as fulfil the condition of the covenant whereof it is a seal; it is (says he) profitable to such as keep the law; but if not, it will stand in no more avail to thee than if thou had never been circumcised; it will not do thy turn if thou look for justification by the works of the law, for thou must then resolve to keep the law perfectly, for that will not be accepted in lieu of it, verse 25. and this he clearerth further, verses 26. 27. by two propositions, or confectaries drawn from this; 1. The Lord doth so little regard your being circumcised, where there is no more, that even those who never were circumcised, if they could perfectly fulfil the law (which indeed is impossible, and only here

supposed) should never be a whit the less accepted of God for their want of circumcision. 2. Yea moreover, such uncircumcised ones, if they could keep the law, should bear witness against thee who art circumcised and keeps it not, and abundantly stop thy mouth. Next he sheweth, verses 28. 29. what circumcision it is that God will regard, and what Jew; not that Jew who is only *one outwardly circumcised*, but who is a Jew *inwardly*, who is one heartily devoted to God, and hath the grace of God at his heart-roots, and is really what he professeth to be, and looketh not so much after the praise and applause of men, as of God: and then that circumcision which God will look to and regard most, is not that which is outward only, in the foreskin of the flesh, nor in *the letter*, that is, only in the bare external literal observation of the rites, or in the dead write, which is of itself cold and lifeless: but it is that of the heart, when there is a change and reformation upon the heart, and that is circumcised, according to that, Jer. iv. 4. *circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart*; and of *the spirit*, that is the thing meant and chiefly held forth by the outward circumcision of the flesh, the spiritual thing understood.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Men who settle upon lyes in building their carnal confidence, make use of many false props to that effect, and when their grounds are proving sandy, so loth are they to shake off their confidence, that if they can get no more to build on, they will settle upon their being within the visible church, enjoying the privileges of church-members, and having the seals of the covenant which God hath made with them, and that they look upon as an impregnable rock: for here, after Paul hath driven them from many shelters, he comes to this at the last, and speaks most of it, because they thought most of it.

II. However we ought to have high and reverent thoughts of the ordinances instituted and appointed by Christ, and be sorry to utter any thing that may seem in the least to derogate from them; yet we should so speak of them and handle them, as they may still be in their own place, and may not shouder out Christ, and become any ground for carnal men to trust unto and settle upon, who love not to go further: therefore doth Paul say, *circumcision verily profiteth*, lest he should be thought to derogate from that ordinance; but he addeth, *if thou keep the law*; that so he may give it its due, and shew their folly in resting upon it, as if it alone could do their turn.

III. As the covenant whereunto the sacraments are annexed as seals, is a mutual covenant, wherein the Lord promiseth to be our God, and we, upon the other part, stipulate to be his people; so the sacraments do not seal up God's being ours in a saving manner, unless we perform our part of the covenant, and when we have performed the condition required of us in the covenant, then do they seal and become a confirming pledge unto us of God's being ours according to his promise: for, saith the apostle, *circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law*; it profiteth then as a confirming ratifying seal of the truth of the covenant, and of all that is therein promised, if thou perform the condition required of thee.

IV. As the sacraments of themselves can confer no grace upon the receivers; so the receivers of them, however before men, and as to external privileges, they may receive some advantage by them; yet as to justification before God, and salvation, they will be no more the better of them than if they had never received them, for *if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision*; if so be the condition of the covenant be not performed, and they become not the Lord's according to the obligation.

V. Tho' we should not contemn nor despise the sacraments, seeing they are instituted and appointed of God; yet we may not lay so much weight upon them, as to account them absolutely necessary unto salvation, so as none without them could be saved; seeing such as have never been partakers of them, if they by faith flee into Christ who hath fulfilled the law, shall be justified and saved no whit less than if they had received the sacraments; for *even the uncircumcised, if they shall keep the righteousness of the law, their uncircumcision shall be counted for circumcision*.

VI. Seeing some may attain unto justification and salvation, viz. thro' faith in Jesus Christ, tho', thro' some one invincible impediment or other, they have never received the seals of the covenant; we should be abundantly convinced of the folly of doting upon these outward privileges, and of a necessity of looking to something beyond them: for this is the strength of the argument.

VII. So strong is corruption in many, that it will carry them to transgress the law of God, over all means and engagements to the contrary; for we see some that are said to be transgressors of the law, howbeit they had the letter, that might shew them the contrary, and were circumcised, and so engaged by covenant to obedience, *who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?*

VIII. Tho' many may conclude well of themselves, because living amongst the throng of ordinances, and taking on vows and engagements upon themselves; yet these will be so far from saving them in the day of accounts, that others that have outstripped them, and have not had such occasions as they have had, shall condemn them, and abundantly stop their mouth: *shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?*

IX. There is a visible church, whose

members are visible and external; and there is an invisible church, which is constituted of invisible and internal members; but as to the formal cause and reason of their being such, viz. faith in Jesus Christ, it is not very obvious to all, for here we read of some that are *Jews outwardly*, and some such *inwardly*.

X. Tho' it be no small privilege to be externally within the house of God; yet it is not enough for a man to be a constituent member of the visible church; but before he expect to be approved of God, he must be a member of the invisible church: for it is he *who is a Jew inwardly, whose praise is not of men but of God.*

XI. Whoever they be who by faith have fled into Christ, and become living members of his mystical body, however they be in small account with the men of this world; yet they are in high estimation with God, *for though their praise be not of men, yet it is of God.*

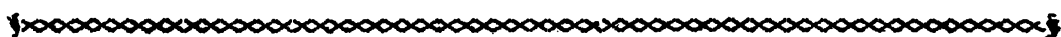
XII. In every sacrament, as there is an external symbol representing, so, there is some inward grace represented, partly as to be given to us of God, and partly, as to be exercised by us: for there is a cir-

cumcision outwardly in the flesh, and a circumcision inwardly in the Spirit.

XIII. The seal of circumcision, as it did hold forth and confirm the truth of God's promises, upon his part, unto the worthy receivers; so, upon the part of such as were circumcised, it held forth their engagement to cast off sin and corruption, and every evil way, that their souls might be pure unto the Lord; for this is the *circumcision of the heart, and in the spirit.*

XIV. It is a great folly for any to think it enough that they have participated of the sacraments, seeing many may have received the external part of the sacrament who are utter strangers unto the inward part thereof; for *circumcision in the flesh* may be where *circumcision in the spirit* is not.

XV. Whoever would expect salvation, should not settle on the external and literal part of the sacraments, but should endeavour after the spiritual part thereof, and that which is in the heart; for that is only *circumcision* worth the name, which is *inward in the heart, and in the spirit.*



CHAPTER III.

VERSES 1. 2. *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?*

Much every way: chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God.

BEFORE the apostle go on in his intended purpose, viz. to prove that the Jews, no less than the Gentiles, may rather expect to be condemned than justified by the works of the law, which he began to do chapter ii. 17. that he might thereby prove his main thesis, viz. *That by the works of the law no man shall be justified*; he first removeth some

objections which he saw might arise from what he had said last, in putting them in the same condition and category with the Gentiles, and that notwithstanding of all those things they boasted of, and particularly circumcision, which they accounted highly of.

Now, from what he had said, in the end of the last chapter, they might gather

ther, that the apostle was not only injurious to them in so doing, but also unto God, who had put some special mark of respect, in many particulars, (as no body could deny) upon the Jews, which he had not done unto the Gentiles; and especially had given them circumcision, a seal of the covenant, which the Gentiles were strangers unto: How is it then, might they say, that the apostle putteth no difference betwixt us and the Gentiles, and layeth aside circumcision, as a matter of no worth or moment? The objection is proposed by way of question, as an inference from the apostle's former doctrine; *What advantage then hath the Jew?* What privilege or prerogative, or what more superabundance hath the Jew than the Gentile? And then again, because he seemed to put a small price upon circumcision, which they gloried much of, he saith again, (as if he were speaking in their name) *or what profit is there of circumcision?* To which last the apostle answereth not now, partly because he had said formerly, that *circumcision profiteth if thou keep the law*; and partly because he speaks of it at more length, in the following chapter.

And as to the first objection, he answereth, verse 2d; and then, to verse 10th, he answereth other objections: after which he followeth his former purpose, and sheweth from scripture, how the Jews, no less than the Gentiles, can expect nothing but wrath for their guilt, and so cannot look for justification by the works of the law, and this unto verse 20th; and then unto the end, he concludes and prosecuteth that truth, that *by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight*.

Unto the first objection he answereth, That the Jews have far more privileges than the Gentiles; and tho' there were no more to be found, this were a privilege great enough, and a chief one too, *chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God*; that the law

and the covenant, which were special and saving oracles, spoken and delivered by the Lord's own mouth, were concredited to them; the tables, and instruments of the covenant, the law and the prophets, and all the promises, were conferred on them, and they honoured so far as to be intrusted with them, and made treasurers (as it were) of this excellent treasure: These instruments, deeds, and evidences of the covenant, contained in the writings of Moses and the prophets, which are called *lively oracles*, Acts vii. 38. were intrusted unto the Jews to keep, for their own and others benefit; as Steven says, *They received the lively oracles to give unto us*: and this was a great piece of respect put upon them, to be keepers of such registers, which was not put upon others, Psal. cxlvii. 19. 20.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. As it is a matter of very great difficulty, for such as God hath blessed with external favours and privileges, and so honoured thereby beyond others, to put these privileges in a right subordination, and not to lay too much stress upon them; so it is as difficult to get them brought to a putting them in their due place, when they have once conceived amiss of them; as we are taught by Paul's insisting so long on this matter, and proposing all their objections, to the end he may answer them, and so clear their misapprehensions concerning their being a visible church in covenant with God, enjoying his ordinances, whereby they are differenced from others: for here the apostle beginneth with a new objection.

II. Carnal men, that have trusted to wrong grounds, and had misapprehensions of their external enjoyments and privileges, which, as external church members, they have been partakers of, if so be they cannot be permitted to enjoy their foolish conceits and apprehensions, but are put from fondly doting upon these as their

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Christ and Mediator, then are they ready to conceive that they serve for no use nor benefit at all; if they cannot get a Saviour made of their external privileges, they think them altogether usefess and fruitless; if their church membership be not enough to carry them to heaven, they know not what it serves for: If the sacraments have not Christ's room with them, they are ready to look upon them as altogether usefess; as is clear from this objection arising upon the back of what the apostle was saying in the end of the former chapter, *What advantage then hath the Jew? and what profit is there of circumcision?* as if they thought, since they be nothing the better, as to justification, of their being externally in covenant with God, and circumcised, they were nothing the better of them at all.

III. As wicked men will be still caviling and carping against the truth, notwithstanding of clear demonstrations; and, when they can do no more, will be ready to asperse the doctrine of truth with foul inferences and deductions, and labour to bind them upon the maintainers of truth; so it is the duty of all asserters of truth to guard against all such false and foul conclusions: for, as the apostle saw that what he had said would not satisfy, but they would imagine some absurdity to follow, so he replied to all such objections.

IV. Howbeit to be externally in covenant with God, and members of his visible church, will not prove a sufficient ground for men to rest on (if they seek for no more) for justification and salvation; yet such, even upon that score, have excellency beyond others, and have many benefits and advantages that others without the church have not: for to this question, *What advantage, or superabundant excellency, hath the Jew?* the apostle answereth, *Much every way.* See Deut. iv. 7. Rom. ix. 4.

V. It is a main and choice advantage, yea, the foundation of all other advantages

and privileges which a visible church enjoy, to have the oracles of God, the word of the great God, the law and the covenant, the instruments and evidences of that covenant among their hands, however many think little of such advantages; for this was the chief advantage of the Jews, *chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

VI. God's word, and every truth that is held forth therein, of whatsoever nature, should have great weight with us, and be received with great reverence, fear, and love, as having on it an impression of majesty, and should be believed as undoubted truth: for here it is called *the oracles of God*, and in Heb. v. 12.

VII. It is the duty of the church of God to be careful to preserve these instruments and evidences of the covenant, these, oracles of God whole and entire, and to see that they be not falsified, nor wronged in any manner, but that they transmit them to posterity safe and sound; seeing the Lord hath intrusted her therewith, she ought not to betray her trust: thus the church of the Jews is said to be *concredited* with these oracles; the Lord made them, his record-keepers.

VERSES 3. 4. *For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightst be justified in thy sayings, and mightst overcome when thou art judged.

BUT yet they might remain unsatisfied for all this, yea, and might seem to be the more confirmed in the truth, of their former inference and deduction by this that the apostle was saying; and therefore he labours to clear and confirm every thing he says, that no scruple or doubt might, if possible, be left with them. Now they might object; You say, that the oracles

oracles of God, the testament and the instruments of the covenant, were laid up with them, and they honoured with this privilege; and that they had this great advantage: but what honour is that privilege to them, and what profit have they by that advantage now, when they are in no better case than the Gentiles; are made sinners no less than they? Yea, how can it be that they could have been so honoured, seeing there were many of the people unbelievers, and did not give credit unto, nor esteemed rightly of, but abused, these oracles of God? And doth not all this rather say, that God took away what once he had bestowed, and so hath failed in his promises; and his covenant is made void, and of none effect, and so God is made to change? This is the objection. Unto which the apostle giveth these answers: *First*, Such an absurdity will no way follow, that because some (he might have said *many*, yea, the most part; but he would not, lest he should have irritated them whom he knew to have been much displeased with him already,) believed not, but rebelled, and apostatized from God, and so, thro' their own folly, lost the benefit of the oracles of the covenant, and of the promises, that therefore God hath falsified his faith, and hath failed in his promises, and so is changed: And that because, *1st*, This apostasy, unbelief and unfaithfulness, was not universal; it was but some, (though many, yet) not all, that did not believe: and it will not follow, that God's promises made to a nation, should fail because of the unbelief of a part seeing the faithfulness of God, and of his promises and covenants, is still verified, and performed to his elect, in whose behalf they were made: and therefore says he. *For what if* (or what shall I say, though) *we did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith* (or the faithful promise and covenant) *of God of none effect?* (void and null.) *God forbid*: Let never such a thing be once heard of; far be it from us

ever to think of such an absurd thing. *2dly*, It cannot be, that because wicked men, through their own unbelief, have prejudged themselves of the good things promised, that therefore God shall be untrue; for God is still true, he still keeps his promise, and stands to his word; he abhorreth lying, and is the author of all truth in the creatures; *His truth is unto the clouds*, Psal. lxxvii. 10. *he will not suffer his faithfulness to fail*, Psal. lxxxix. 33. Therefore says he, *Let God be true*; let God, who is truth, and loveth truth, be acknowledged and confessed to be true, in maintaining his covenant, and fulfilling his promises. And this he farther illustrateth by adding, *but every man a liar*. Every man, considered in himself as corrupted by nature, is unconstant, perfidious in his covenants, and a lover of lies, and not of truth, Psal. cxvi. 11. *3dly*, This is again confirmed by scripture; where the apostle is citing the words of David, Psal. li. 4. (and therein following the version of the Seventy, who put *that thou mightst overcome*, for *that thou mightst be clear*, or *pure*; and therein rendering the word as it signifieth in the Syriac idiom; and yet some think the word may bear both: however the sense will be the same, for who is declared pure, and just in judgment, may be said to overcome his enemy,) who, after Nathan came to him, fell to an ample confession of his heinous iniquity, that God might get all the glory, in his righteousness and faithfulness, both in his justice in threatening such sore judgments, and in his mercy in keeping his promises, both general and particular, notwithstanding of his heinous transgression; hereby God's justice and faithfulness, withal, was the more discovered, and conspicuous, so far was God from being liable to be charged with failing in his promises, notwithstanding of his sinfulness. We may take his proof thus: Man's unbelief and sinfulness is so far from making void and null God's promises, that the rather thereby is occa-

sion administred for God to get the greater glory, as of his justice in punishing according to equity, so of his faithfulness in keeping covenant notwithstanding; as we see in his own sometimes, who thro' weakness bewray their own unfaithfulness, yet God keeps his promise; yea, thereby takes occasion the more to illustrate his faithfulness and constancy; as in David's case is clear, who says, *that thou mayst be justified in thy speeches*; that is, declared and made known to be faithful in all thy promises, and in all thy words, or when thou speakest: *and overcome when thou art judged*; that is, found clear, and without spot; pure without any crimination, so as all mouths may be stoped, *when thou shalt judge*, or when thou shalt be judged; (the Greek will import both, tho' the Hebrew word be rather active than passive) that is, when thou shalt punish the wicked according to their deserts, or keepest truth in thy promises; for this is an act of justice and righteousness in God, Psal. cxliii. 1. 1. 1 John i. 1. or if it be taken passively, the meaning is this, when men consider thy doings, and pass their judgment on thy faithfulness: both cometh to one.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. However God hath not tied himself absolutely to continue his privileges and dignities, wherewith he honoureth a people, with them for ever, but is free to go when he is provoked, and pleaseth, notwithstanding of his promises, which are but conditional; yet such is the folly and ignorance of men, as to interpret that change of his dispensations, which he, for wise and holy ends, maketh, to be a coming short of his promises, as if he were not able to accomplish what was promised, and a change in him who is truth and unchangeable: for thus in this objection were they infering, that God's truth and faithfulness was evanished.

II. However God be a free agent, and hath liberty to go and come, as seemeth

good in his eyes, unto a people; to bestow upon them what excellencies and privileges he pleaseth, and how long he shall think good; yet ordinarily where God setteth up a church and his ordinances, and bestoweth upon them fair advantages, his oracles, his covenant, and promises, he doth not remove thence, but when his goodness is abused, his ordinances vilipended, his excellent favours slighted, and his oracles and words misbelieved and disregarded: for whatever change of dispensation came upon the church of the Jews, we see there was before, a misbelieving and rebelling in some, there were some that brake covenant with God, became perfidious, and became apostates and infidels; *what if some did not believe, nor keep covenant, but fell away and apostatized*: See Rev. ii. 5. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. 16.

III. Whatever prejudice rebellious misbelievers do themselves, in not making use by faith of the promises of God, and of the covenant, frustrating themselves of all the good contained in the holy oracles of God, by their incredulity and perfidiousness; yet that will not stop the conduit, nor obstruct the flowing down of the good things, wraped up in the precious promises, unto the faithful covenant-keepers: God's punishing and pursuing rebels with vengeance for their rebellion, with the one hand, will not hinder him to make effectual what he hath promised unto faithful, honest believers, whom he hath chosen, with the other hand: and therefore says Paul, *shall the unbelief of some make the faith of God of none effect*? Which interrogation hath the force of a strong negation.

IV. However matters go, in the Lord's wise dispensations, and bowls roll, believers ought to be persuaded, and rest confident of the truth of God's promises made to them, seeing God's faithfulness is engaged, and he can no more deny the performance of the special promises made unto his own than he can deny himself, or his own faithfulness.

fulness and fidelity; for the promises, which are a chief part of the oracles of God, are here called *God's faith*, or fidelity, to shew, how near the one is engaged in the other, and how sure they are; so near, as if they were not distinct.

V. Howbeit wicked graceless men think a promise but a poor support, and a sorry thing to listen to, as having no solidity in it, as being void, empty, and frothy, and fruitless; yet there is usefulness, fullness, and effectual worth in each of them, which should highly commend them to us; for while he denieth that God's faithful promises are made void, useless, uneffectual, weak, or abolished, (all which the word rendered here, *made of none effect*, doth import and signify) he affirmeth the contrary of them.

VI. It is good sometimes, and christian prudence requireth it, not to speak the worst of folks wickedness, when it may move them to hear our exhortations with more patience, and be no way in prejudice of truth, but prove helpful to their gaining; for when Paul might have said, the great bulk and body, and the most part of the Jews, had revolted and rebelled against God, he saith only *some*; *What if some believed not?*

VII. Whatever foul and blasphemous conclusions Satan and his followers would falsely draw from the truths of God, we ought to reject them with full detestation, as unworthy to be heard, or once named; therefore says Paul, *God forbid*; away with such an inference, it ought never to get footing in our thoughts.

VIII. As God is true, steadfast, and faithful in all his promises; so it is the duty of believers to be persuading themselves of the truth of this, and putting it beyond question, even when dispensations are as a thick cloud coming in betwixt the promise and its performance, and, as it were, putting it out of sight, and barricading the entry of the performance; and even then should we be fixed in the belief

of the Lord's constancy and truth, and so live as being persuaded of it: for even now, when they could not see how God's promises should take effect, he asserts this truth, as that which should not be questioned, and which they should hold by when sense was gone blind; and could not see how it should be; but, even then, *let God be righteous, just and true*, faithful and honest.

IX. As man in himself, by nature, and as unrenewed by the Spirit of God, is false, erroneous, unsteady, and given to lying, so that this is not the common and peculiar disease of the *Cretians*, Tit. i. 2. but is the epidemical disease of all by nature, they *walk in a vain shew*, Psal. xxxix. 6. and *go astray so soon as they be born, speaking lies*, Psal. lviii. 3. and take *delight in lies*, Psal. lxii. 4. so the serious consideration of this, as it should serve to confirm us in the faith of God's veracity, whose *ways are not as man's ways*, but *higher than they*, as *the heavens are higher than the earth*, Isa. lv. 8. 9. and so set forth the glory of God's truth and constancy, (for which end it is brought in here) so should it teach us whom to trust unto, God or man, in the time when men would labour to bear in upon us God's inconstancy or changeableness: all which is here taught us, when Paul adds, *and let every man be a liar*.

X. When contradictors will not be satisfied, but loaden truth with abominable blasphemous consequences, the safest way is to stop their mouth with *thus it is written*: and, as there is none that know the mind of the Lord better than his Spirit; so should the Spirit of the Lord speaking in the Scriptures be the final determiner of controversies unto us, with whose determination we ought to rest satisfied, tho' our carnal foolish wit and reason cannot win to see a reason why: therefore does the apostle, in the last place, bring out this proof, *as it is written*, as that which might fully satisfy them.

XI. The upshot of all dispensations of
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whatsoever kind, both toward the wicked and godly, shall be a justifying of God, so as all mens mouths shall be stoped, however his justice and equity in his procedure ly hid for a time, and buried under the calumnies and opprobries of the wicked: and this is a truth verified in all ages, for both David and Paul set to their seal to this, that God shall be justified in his words, and overcome when he judgeth.

XII. However the Lord exercise people for the present, it is the duty of all God's children so to behave themselves, under the saddest dispensations, as others may see and be convinced of God's equity and justice in punishing them according to deservings; and, withal, that they look upon God as faithful also to stand to his promises, as David did here; he fell a confessing publickly his iniquities, that all might be convinced how just God was in punishing of him; and, withal, shew how he was confident, that notwithstanding of this, God would be as good as his word, and be justified in his words, or promises, and clear when any shall consider his ways, overcome when he shall be judged.

XIII. God's constancy and fidelity in keeping promise to one of his children, notwithstanding of failings, which may provoke him to anger, and do possibly draw down strokes from him, should be a sufficient demonstration and confirmation to persuade all of the truth of this, that God will keep his promise faithfully, notwithstanding of the gross abominations, and open impiety and infidelity of those among whom they live, and of their own particular failings and escapes: for this is the purport of this testimony alledged.

VERSES 5. 6. *But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?*

UPON this that he had said, he foreseeth what carnal reason would take occasion to vent. (as at what truth will it not take occasion to vent its froath!) and how ignorant graceless folk would be ready to stumble at what he had said; and therefore he digresseth to loose this seeming knot, and take this stumbling-block (how small soever in itself) out of their way.

He had said in the former words, that the unfaithful acts of God's children (let be the wicked pranks of the wicked) were so far from making God's promises void, and without fruit or effect, that, on the contrary, thereby was his truth and faithfulness more illustrated. Now, upon this might carnal reason (for Paul speaks not, nor proposes, this objection out of his own head, nor of himself, but as personating men led by human reason, who ordinarily carp against such truths and mysteries as they cannot well understand, and, being ignorant of God's mind, will not submit thereto, therefore says he, *I speak after the manner of men*, acted by carnal reason) say, How can God be just and righteous in punishing folk then, if so be (as you say) that our unrighteousness and unfaithfulness, doth commend or declare God's righteousness, verity, and fidelity, goodness and mercy; all which the word imports. Is not God unjust and unrighteous in laying on punishments, those sad fruits of his displeasure and anger. Now the apostle replieth: No, God is not unjust in this. *God forbid*: what an absurd, detestable and abominable thing were this. And the giveth a reason why he accounteth the blasphemous deduction a detestable absurdity, because God is the judge of the world: he ordereth all things in it very well, and disposeth even what is most disorderly into good order; he ruleth and governeth it, by his own justice, most justly, rewarding every one according to justice, Gal. xviii. 25. and at length will judge it at

great day of judgment; for *then how* (ſays he) *ſhall God judge the world?*

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. Tho' carnal reaſon be a blind and incompetent judge in God's matters, yet is it ready to meaſure all truths by its own line, and what it cannot fully comprehend, to carp at, and raiſe blaſphemous and abominable aſperſions, to darken, if it can, the face of God's glorious truths: for carnal reaſon is ready here to aſperſe the truth which Paul was holding out formerly, as if it would hold forth as much as if God were unrighteous.

II. Among the many myſteries, which carnal reaſon, and men led by no other guide, and void of the Spirit, cannot ſee through, this is one, How God can ſuffer men to ſin, and thereby take occaſion to demonſtrate the glory of his attributes, and yet can and will puniſh men for theſe ſame ſins; for this is it that ſtuck with the carnal man, and which he could not digeſt, how God can be juſt in *taking vengeance*, when *our unrighteouſneſs commendeth his righteouſneſs*.

III. However we could not ſee how ſuch a truth that is clearly founded on the word can be defended, and ſome one abſurd conſequence or other, that carnal wit would draw from it, can be avoided; yet it is not allowed us to quite the grip of the truth, which we have fully cleared us, but rather wait upon the Lord for light, and abhor all ſuch foul-faced inferences, with a perfect deteſtation: for thus Paul would have had them doing, not denying the truth he had formerly aſſerted, but ſticking by it, and, withal, abhorring any ſuch foul concluſion: *What ſhall we ſay? is God unrighteous* for this? *God forbid.*

IV. How oft ſoever blaſphemous expreſſions are vented in our ears, whatever preſence they may ſeem to have, chriſtian hearts ſhould as often riſe at them; and tender Chriſtians can never hear any thing uttered to God's diſhonour, under what-

ſoever ſeeming pretext, but their ſouls loath and abhor the ſame: for here again, at ſuch a thought as this, that God ſhould be accounted unjuſt, his heart riſes, and he crieth out, *God forbid.*

V. Tho' it be a hard matter to handle the myſteries of God, ſo as wicked men may not take occaſion thereat to vent their own fancies and blaſphemies; yet we ſhould walk ſo warily (as being guided by the Spirit of God) and handle thoſe profound myſteries ſo tenderly, as they may not have any juſt ground; and, however, if they ſhall carp, or ſeem to have the leaſt ground whereupon to go, it is our duty to labour their thorough clearneſs, and remove all rubs, or any thing that may ſtumble them, and ſo looſe all objections, that the oppoſers may (if poſſible) fully cloſe with truth: for Paul condeſcendeth to take this objection out of the way.

VI. In handling of ſuch myſterious points, and clearing them from foul blaſphemous inferences, we ſhould ſo guard, as hearers might not perceive any untenderneſs, or want of reverence in us; nor ſhould we needleſsly heap up objections, that carnal wit would never have thought of, out of our own heads, but only ſuch as are obvious, and likely to ſtick with people; after Paul's example here, who ſays, *he ſpeaks after the manner of men*, to ſhew, that this was common in their mouth, and that they might not in the leaſt ſuſpect him of uttering any blaſphemy out of his own head.

VII. Tho' the Lord, to declare his infinite wiſdom, who can wiſely extract good out of evil, and to manifeſt his wonderful faithfulneſs, will make uſe of the unfaithful dealings of people, the more to illuſtrate how faithful and true he is, who can keep covenant for all that; yet this will no way bind up his hands from puniſhing them according to juſtice; the manifeſtation of one of his attributes will not juſtifie out the manifeſtation of another; he can manifeſt

both his justice and mercy at once; and even when *our unrighteousness doth commend his righteousness*, he can and will take vengeance.

VIII. Our unrighteousness, being a transgression of God's holy law, according unto which we ought to walk, can have no natural inclination, or tendency, as it is such, to manifest or commend God's truth, but only as an occasion which the infinitely wise God maketh use of, to declare how just and faithful he is, who will keep promise, notwithstanding that we stand not often to our promise: thus, only by accident, it is, that *our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God*.

IX. God is so just and righteous in ruling the world, and is so displeased with sin, that he will make sinners find how bitter a thing it is to break his holy laws, by sending on, or adding still, the bitter fruits of his anger and displeasure: therefore it is said, that *he taketh vengeance*, or inferreth and inflicteth anger, or the fruits of his anger.

X. As God is a righteous governor, ruling the world according to equity and justice, ordering all things therein most wisely and justly, giving to every one a just recompence, as he seeth it for his own glory, and will one day judge every man according to equity; so the right thought and apprehension of this his just and righteous general providence, over all the world, should abundantly squeeze, and for ever put to silence, these wicked suggestions and cogitations, that, through corruption, will often be putting up their heads, and breaking out, when God is afflicting us for sin: for the answer that Paul giveth to this objection is, *for then how shall God judge the world?*

VERSES 7. 8. *For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,)*

Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

Carnal reason being still more dissatisfied, the apostle goes on yet again, in speaking after the manner of men; and proposeth another objection, which carnal reason had against his doctrine, to the end it may be removed out of the way. And so this may either be a fourth objection, or the third repeated and augmented: Take it up thus; You granted formerly, that our unrighteousness might have commended the righteousness of God: Now, if that be true, that *through my lie, or in, and by my lie, God's truth*, his constancy in keeping his promises; his faithfulness and righteousness, is made to excel and abound the more, (or was made like a well that could not contain its water, but sent it forth in great abundance, as the word may import) to his greater glory and honour: then 1. It will follow, that in lying, or breaking covenant, or more generally, in sinning against God, I should not be accounted a transgressor by God or man, or judged, punished, or chastised, as a sinner by God; therefore, *why* (would the objectors say) *yet am I judged as a sinner*; for this interrogation hath the force of a strong negation. Yea, 2. It will follow that we should sin and commit iniquity, that good may come of it; we ought to promote (would carnal wisdom say) God's glory and honour, and do whatsoever may tend thereunto; and if by sin God is glorified, we ought to sin; and this clearly followeth from Paul's doctrine, so that Paul seemeth to be the approver of sin. Unto this objection the apostle maketh a double reply: (1.) Denying that ever he asserted such influence, or that any such thing can be consequentially deduced from his doctrine; and therefore says he, *as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say*; it is but a base calumny, a slanderous report, vented to defame us and our doctrine. (2.) We are so far from

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owning ſuch a doctrine, that we affirm, that whoſoever preacheth or practiſeth ſo, ſhall be condemned, and that moſt juſtly, *whoſe damnation is juſt*; ſuch may mock (as if he would ſay) at our doctrine at leiſure, when they ſhall be juſtly condemned, and ſhall feel that puniſhment, which they ſay we deny, and that becauſe they have aſſented to ſuch an impiety, and then durſt calumniate the goſpel and the preachers thereof, upon that ſcore.

HENCE LEARN,

I. It is a moſt dangerous thing for folks to take carnal reaſon for their guide in the matters of God, and queſtion every truth which carnal reaſon will not aſſent unto: for as it is unable to dive into the myſteries of God, they tranſcending far its capacity; ſo is it able to keep poor blind folks, that are under its command and rule; from receiving ſatisfaction, tho' truths be never ſo clearly held forth; and can furniſh them (it being fruitful enough in invention) with few objections, when others have been abundantly answered: for here carnal reaſon, not reſting ſatisfied with what hath been ſaid before, propoſeth two other black conſequences, as if they did naturally flow from the truth handled, *viz.* that then it would follow, that none are to be accounted ſinners, and all may fully, yea, and ſhould, give themſelves unto a courſe of ſinning.

II. It is our duty, when we are handling the truths of God, to leave no ſtone unrolled, whereby they may be heartily embraced, but to remove all objections, which with any colour of reaſon may be propoſed, and to ſhew the inconſequence of all ſuch inferences, which carnal wiſdom would deduce from the doctrines aſſerted; that hereby oppoſers may be gained, or their mouths ſtoped, and the weak (who are unable to yoke with bold contradicitors) may be confirmed in the truth; as Paul doth here, answering objection after objection.

III. It is a truth unſhaken, notwithstanding of all the aſſaults of carnal wits; That however ſin, in its own nature, be a violation of God's law, and ſo a robbing him of that glory which would redound to him, as ſupreme law-giver, thro' man's obedience; yet the infinitely wiſe God can, and will thereby, take occaſion to glorify himſelf another way, and ſo outſhoot Satan, and his wicked inſtruments, in their own bow, by outwitting them, and obtaining that (with the greater loſs and prejudice to them) which they think to rob him of; for ſtill this is a truth with Paul, *That God's truth and fidelity doth more abound through our lie, and perfidiouſneſs, to his glory.*

IV. All the uſe that carnal reaſon doth make of the profound myſteries of God, (and eſpecially of this, That ſuch is the abyſs of wiſdom which God manifeſteth in ruling the world, and the wicked, that though wicked men tranſgreſs his laws, and thereby labour to diſhonour him, by reſuſing ſubjection unto him and his laws, yet ſtill he is a gainer, and the more he declareth and manifeſteth the glory and excellency of his glorious attributes,) is this. they verily think that they ſhould not be reckoned with for all their abominations, yea, and take encouragement to ſin the more; for from this, that *God's truth, or fidelity, doth the more abound through our lie*, carnal reaſon would infer, that therefore *we ſhould not be judged as ſinners*, yea, and that *we ſhould do evil, that good may come of it*: See Rom. vi. 1.

V. God ſo exerciſeth his infinite wiſdom, as a wiſe alchemiſt, extracting good and glory to himſelf out of the ſinful carriages of wicked folks, as that he neither alloweth nor approveth of them in their ſins, nor looſeth the reins unto them to ſin the more, nor ſhall they be any whit the leſs guilty, or liable to judgment, becauſe of that: for Paul denieth the conſequence, or that it will follow, that becauſe *God's truth doth abound through our lie, that therefore*

we should not be judged as sinners, or might sin that good might come of it; no thanks to man for this, who drive at the quite contrary, and are here only passive.

VI. It tendeth much to the glory of God, when any of his attributes and properties are manifested, illustrated, and made conspicuous, notwithstanding of what Satan and wicked men were doing, to blur and obscure the same; so as his attributes break through all clouds (which, as was thought, would have intercepted the shining lustre thereof) with more admirable brightness; and whatever dust men cast up to darken the face of the sun, will but occasion the more glorious shining thereof: therefore Paul grants, that *God's truth hath much more abounded through our lie, and that to his glory.*

VII. However in evils of punishment, we may with David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. make choice of a lesser to eschew a greater, yet in sins we are to keep our hands clean of all, even the least, tho' thereby we should evite the greatest hazard imaginable, and shun the uttering of the least untruth; under whatsoever pretext we may be tempted to the contrary; we may not *speak wickedly for God, nor talk deceitfully for him*, Job xiii. 7. God needeth not such help at our hands, for the making of himself glorious by, and we should *hate every evil way, or false way*, Psal. cxix. 104. 128. so as not to be drawn thereunto; tho' it should appear, in all probability, that much good should follow upon our yeilding unto sin: for Paul denieth that ever he or any of his stamp affirmed, *that we should do evil that good might come of it.*

VIII. It is an old custom of Satan and his perverse followers, to be wronging the faithful servants of Christ, and fastening false doctrine upon them, as the maintainers thereof, which they never did approve of; and such an exercise as this should be taken in good part, seeing the apostles before us met with the like false imputations; yea, and Christ himself: for there

were some that affirmed, *that the apostles said, we might do evil that good may come of it; which doctrine Paul abhorred.*

IX. It is a great piece of honour and credit put upon a man, when God maketh use of him to stand for the maintenance and defence of truth, and is a great disgrace for any man to stand for error; and a godly tender soul will look upon it as a defaming and striking thro' their good name, to be looked upon, or accounted such, as countenance or defend error: for they account it their greatest honour to be subservient to God in the maintenance of truth: all which we are taught by this, that Paul says, *they were blasphemed, or had their good name wounded, by false tales and lying aspersions; for so the word rendered here, slanderously reported, doth import.*

X. As the servants of the Lord ought to walk circumspectly, and in handling of truth, should do it so warily, as no accuser may have just ground to charge them with any false doctrine; so, when the accuser of the brethren hath stirred up some to calumniate their good names, they ought, in a humble prudent way, to vindicate themselves of such foul aspersions, lest truth should suffer by their silence: as Paul doth here, in avowing, that such, in saying so of him and the other apostles, did but falsely calumniate, and with those rumours and false reports did wrong their good name, and blaspheme them.

XI. Howbeit graceless souls may take great delight in playing Satan's game, in slandering, and by false lies wronging the good name of God's servants; yet, in end, they shall find the fruits of their doings to be bitter and sad, when they shall be justly condemned, if they repent not: for of such, says Paul, *their damnation is just.*

XII. When men are so addicted to their erroneous courses, as to persist in them notwithstanding of any thing that can be brought for their conviction, as it is just with God to pursue such with his wrath

and indignation; so it is but folly to deal any more with them, especially when they are become so gross, as to be so far from being willing to receive conviction, as that they slander, and lay false imputations upon, the maintainers of truth; and it is safest then to leave such to God's immediate conviction, that they may be persuaded of the truth of that, the contrary whereof they lay to the charge of God's faithful servants: for all the answer that the apostle now, in the last place, giveth to these objectors, (besides the simple negation of the consequence of what they made bold to infer from his doctrine) is this, *whose damnation is just.*

VERSE 9. *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.*

BEfore the apostle cometh to his new argument from testimonies, he first concludeth from what he had said formerly, that the Jews were in no better case, as to justification, than the Gentiles. What, (might they say) are we not then in a better case than the Gentiles, seeing you ascribe to us such a pre-eminence in respect of privileges, and do maintain it so strongly? He answereth, that though there was a difference in point of civil and ecclesiastical dignity, (which was all he granted, verse 2.) yet if we have respect to ourselves, says he, who have no way deserved those forementioned privileges, nor have profited much by them, we have no excellency beyond the Gentiles; but chiefly (which is the business he hath in hand) in the matter of justification, we, says he, (for he includes himself, that they might so much the less take offence) *in no wise are better than they*; and this he confirmeth from what he said formerly both touching Jews and Gentiles, chapters first and second, *For*, says he, *we have before proved*, (not only accused, but with strong

reasons convinced, we have charged and proved by reason, as the original importeth) *both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin*, that is under the guilt and condemning power of sin; as Gal. iii. 22. *But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. When people do once doat on privileges, and external favours granted of God, it is so hard a matter to get them rectified in their thoughts, that whatever they hear spoken of these privileges, considered in themselves, as tending to hold forth their nature, and to put them in their own place, and to keep folk from the other extremity of trampling upon, and vilipending them, tendereth rather to confirm them in their false opinion, than bring them off it; for this we see here, by Paul's answering this objection, that from what Paul granted, verse 2d, as clearing the nature of these external privileges, they were ready to be the more hardened and confirmed; and to say, *are we not then better than they?*

II. However, in speaking of the privileges and external advantages, which God is pleased to bestow on the visible members of his church, we should beware of derogating from their just esteem; yet, considering the proneness of such as do misplace them, in their resting upon them, to abuse what they hear, to foster themselves in their erroneous practice, we ought warily to guard against that, and upon this score and consideration, to cast them as far down as formerly we put them up, after Paul's example here, who fearing they should have turned what he had said unto a wrong use, presently answereth that question, *are we not better than they?* thus, *no, in no wise.*

III. When we are crying down privileges and external advantages, which in themselves are to be valued, as great fa-

vours of God, and when kept in their due place are useful) in regard of people's resting on them, and applying them to a wrong use; then, as it is the best way to guard against people's taking offence, to be shewing them how in so doing we do no more wrong to them than to ourselves, so it is a prevalent way to convince them of their folly in misplacing these allowances, when our doctrine is backed with our example, and they see, we would have them doing that which we have done ourselves, and that we are no more trusting to these privileges than we would have them doing: for Paul, as to ward off their taking offence, so the more to prevail with them, sheweth, that albeit he was a Jew as well as they, and so had all the advantages they had; yet, in point of justification, he was no ways because of them (solely) better than the Gentiles: therefore, says he, *are we better than they? No.*

IV. Howbeit the privileges and advantages which God confereth upon church-members, puts a great difference betwixt them, and such as are without, in point of ecclesiastical dignity; yet they put no honour or dignity upon church-members, as to real acceptance before God, or in point of justification: for in this sense it is, that Paul says, *that the Jews are no ways better than the Gentiles*; all those privileges did not make them holy by nature, and righteous before God, and so, no whit more acceptable before him: for notwithstanding thereof, they, no less than the Gentiles, *were under sin.*

V. This should abundantly convince folk of folly, in trusting to, and expecting God's special favour, because of privileges and external advantages, bestowed on them by God; viz. That those cannot deliver them from guilt of sin, and the condemning power thereof; but that notwithstanding of all those, they are still in their natural condition, under sin: for the apostle gives this as a reason, why, notwithstanding of these advantages, they have

no pre-eminence, viz. because *they are still under sin*, as well as others who want those privileges. And that should only be high in our account, which serveth to help us out of this natural condition, and bring us from under the condemning power of sin: for, says he, *we have proved both Jew and Gentile under sin.*

VI. It is the common lot and calamity of all mankind, bond or free, Jew or Gentile, of whatsoever sex or quality, to be by nature, and till free grace make a change, under sin, under both the dominion of it, and condemning power thereof; to have sin as a tyrant domineering over them, and sentencing them to death; and that since Adam's treacherous breach of covenant, Gal. iii. 23.; and therefore *sin* is said to *have reigned*, Rom. v. 21. and vi. 14. and to have *a law*, Rom. vii. 23. 25.: for here, both *Jews and Gentiles* are said to *be under sin.*

VII. When a people are once once puffed up with a vain conceit of their own condition, by reason of some external advantages and privileges which they have, they are so blinded and bewitched, that they cannot, nor will not see how sad and miserable their condition is, notwithstanding of these, albeit there be never so clear and undeniable demonstrations held forth to convince them: for, albeit Paul had abundantly before proved (as he says) both Jews and Gentiles to be under sin; yet so blinded were they with self-love, that he saw a necessity, even after all these proofs, of telling them, that they had no pre-eminence, and were no better as to their spiritual condition, and before God, than others.

VIII. As it is a matter of no small difficulty to get people thoroughly convinced of their natural condition, how they are slaves to sin, and dead and condemned to death thereby; so it is ministers duty to be labouring so much the more, with clear and undeniable proofs, to bear in convictions on people, of this their natural condition: therefore, says Paul, *we have be-*
fore

fore proved, (or as the word is, we have demonstrated by producing clear reasons and evidences, and have made our libel good, by producing particular crimes and making them out) *both Jew and Gentile to be under sin*; which sheweth, that it was no easy matter to convince them of this their natural condition, seeing he was at so much pains to get it done: and his example in this is teaching.

IX. As folks becoming servants of sin, and voluntarily giving their members unto sin, as members of unrighteousness, do declare them to be under the feet of sin as slaves; so our actual transgressions and daily outbreakings are a sufficient demonstration of our sad condition by nature, as under sin; and our actual transgressions and outbreakings, rightly considered, would put us in mind of our original guilt and sinful nature, and consequently of our obnoxiousness to death and damnation, for thus the apostle *had proved before both Jew and Gentile to be under sin*; viz. the Gentiles, chapter first, because of their detaining the truth in *unrighteousness, idolatry, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, &c.* see chapter i. 29. 30. 31. and chapter second, because they boasted of *the law, and did steal, commit adultery, and sacrilege*, and occasioned the *dishonour of God* by their carriage: see from verse 17. to 25.

X. The outbreakings of some, should convince all of their natural depravity and wickedness; and the best should look back unto, and take a view of their natural estate, when they see others breaking forth into all kind of wickedness; though they, (having the same wicked disposition, and the seed of all those cursed abominations in themselves, by nature,) be by grace restrained from the like extravagances: for Paul here puts himself into the same condition with the rest, and from the fore-mentioned acts of iniquity whereof all surely are guilty, he concludes, *that all both*

Jew, (and himself among the rest,) and Gentile, are under sin.

VERSES 10. 11. 12. *As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one:*

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doth good, no not one.

THE apostle, having, in the former part, asserted, that God conferred great external privileges, upon the Jews, and so preferred them unto the Gentiles, and vindicated that doctrine from all that could be objected against it; he doth here begin the prosecution of his former purpose, which was, to shew, that the Jews could not expect to be justified by works, being guilty of such heinous and abominable offences, as they were guilty of; and that they were thus and thus guilty, he proveth, unto verse 20. from several testimonies out of the Psalms and Esaias. And he pitcheth upon those testimonies, for some special reasons, possibly because under David and Hezekiah (in whose days Esaias prophesied, Isa. i. 1.) the Jewish church was purest; and so hence may be solidly and firmly concluded, that seeing there was so much wickedness in those days, (which none can deny, who consult those testimonies,) there would rather be more as less, at other times, which were less pure; and so what was affirmed of the Jews at that time, might, with as much colour of reason, if not more, be affirmed of them, in all ages. However this will hold, that whatever sin is laid to the charge of one, and he guilty of it, the fountain and seed of that, as of all other sins, which any one may, or doth break out into, is in all others, who possibly may be free of some gross particulars: and so in this case, if we prove one guilty, we prove all guilty: And this also may have

weight, that David, from whom the most part of these testimonies are taken, was a type of Christ, and so what he spake of his enemies, may be meant, of all that are without Christ.

And that the apostle may be the more clear in his dispute, having now necessarily digressed somewhat in the 10th verse, he layeth down his thesis, *viz.* That there is no man, no not one man, that is righteous; which is the assumption of his principal argument, which may be conceived to be this, If no man be righteous according to the law, then no man can be justified by the law; this the apostle passeth as certain and undeniable; but so it is, that no man is righteous according to the law: Therefore, &c. Now this assumption he hath been proving formerly, both in reference to the Gentiles and to the Jews, by clear reasons, and now he is about to prove it by clear testimonies; and therefore saith, *It is written, there is none righteous, no not one.* And thus I think, these words, verse 10. should rather be looked on as the proposition, which the apostle is about to prove by these following passages, than as any part of the testimony, and that because I find not these words in those places, to which the apostle refereth in this his first testimony, *viz.* Psal. xiv. 2. 3. or Psal. liii. 2. 3. either in the Hebrew text, nor yet in the Greek version of the Seventy, (which version, tho' often varying from the Hebrew, the apostle, in dealing with the Gentiles, doth for the most part follow, it being all the Bible which they then had; and even here in these citations he followeth that version, word for word, throughout them all, except that, verses 15. 16. cited out of Isa. lix. 7. 8. where yet the discrepancy is nothing considerable) nor is there any thing looking thereunto, but this word, which immediately precedeth the words cited verses 11. 12. both in Psal. xiv. and liii. *viz. there is none that doth good;* now this the apostle bring-

eth in as a probation, afterward, according as it followeth in the original.

The first testimony then, set down, verses 11. 12. is, as I said, brought out of Psal. xiv. 2. 3. and Psal. liii. 2. 3. the apostle citeth the words of the Seventy, rather as they are set down, Psal. xiv. than liii. only we may note, that the apostle sets down these words, verse 11. rather positively, than as they are in the original; for the Psalmist sets them down thus, *the Lord looked down from heaven, to see if there was any that understood,* &c. and thereby implying some other thing, (which the apostle saw, did not make for his use,) beside this which the apostle here setteth down as most firily expressed, and abundantly speaking to his purpose; so that as the Psalmist hath them, they hold forth this which the apostle saith, and something more; however, the meaning of the words is clear, David is bewailing the general condition of people in his time, and the horrible profaneness, which had overspread the church, the Israel of God, (which lay near his heart, and therefore he harps upon the same string in another psalm,) where there was such a company of unregenerate ones, who were found by the all-knowing God, to be without knowledge, he saw there was *not any that did understand;* the word in the Hebrew signifieth *to be prudent, provident, intelligent, considerate, to know, to understand, to foresee;* and the Greek word signifieth not a simple bare knowledge, but a *knowledge joined with deliberation, a practical knowledge, joined with diligence and industry, or a diligent painfulness and endeavour to know and learn:* Nor was there any that did seek God; the word in the Hebrew signifieth, *to enquire for, seek out, find out, to seek diligently, with great carefulness, to enquire for sedulously as scholars who are desirous to learn;* there was none among all that unregenerate pack that did seek diligently after God in a right manner, to know and serve him, and that they

they may approve themselves to him, and have his glory set before their eyes, as the end of their actions: *They are all gone out of the way*; the Hebrew word signifieth, *they are gone back, turned aside, rebelled, become perverse, rebellious and refractory or contumacious*; the same word is used, Hos. iv. 18. and there rendered *four*, expressing their filthy drunkenness and gluttony to be such, as they cast up stinking vomitings, or so engorged their stomach, as the drink fours upon it, and corrupts; so they became like four stinking drink, as it were casten up again. *They are together become unprofitable*, the Hebrew word signifieth, *they are altogether become filthy, stinking, like froath, they are become rotten*, and so unfavoury and useless, and good for nothing: *There is none that doth good, no not one*, there is none so meek and jocund as to be ready to do good to others, no not so much as one.

The force of the apostle's argument from this citation may be this; Those who are foolish, inconsiderate, without any saving practical knowledge of God, and are not careful to know God, nor his mind, and the way to please him; but are gone back and proven rebellious, and become so filthy, abominable, and unprofitable, and every way useless; cannot be counted just by the law. But so it is, that the most part of the visible church in David's days, even all that were in black nature, not enlightened by God's word, nor sanctified by his Spirit, which were the greatest part by far, were such; and such as they were, are all by nature, (there being no difference betwixt one and another, by nature, until grace put a difference :) Therefore, &c.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. The scripture rightly studied and applied, will abundantly convince every man of his natural depravity and wickedness; and the little serious consideration and searching of God's mind out of his word in this particular, is the cause why many remain ignorant

of their natural condition, and never win to take up themselves aright, or to have right thoughts of themselves, or to see an absolute necessity of flying out of themselves to seek for life and salvation in and thro' a Mediator; and there is that in the scriptures, as being the unerring word of truth, set out by the Spirit of truth, that will settle the conscience in the belief of a truth, and silence all contrary objections, when it is spiritually considered and applied: all which Paul teacheth here, by bringing in scripture proof, after all his former arguments, to convince the Jews of their sin; shewing that their vain and foolish conceit of themselves, flowed from their ignorance of the scriptures; and now he would have them resting satisfied, as fully confirmed of the truth of their natural depravity, upon these evidences brought from scripture, in the last place; for he addeth, *as it is written, &c.*

II. Let doctrines proposed seem never so probable, and the proposers never so judicious and rational, yet that should not be a sufficient ground for us upon which to rest persuaded of the truth of these doctrines; but we must *to the law and to the testimony*, Isa. viii. 20. and must *try the spirits, whether they be of God* or not, 1 John iv. 1.; but that which solely, (in matters weighty and fundamental, and which are determined in the word) should move us to rest assured of the truth thereof, is, *for thus it is written*: Therefore Paul, tho' an apostle, will not have them taking this solely upon his word, but puts them to this, *as it is written*: the doctrines of the best, even tho' angels, should be tried, whether it be another gospel which they hear, or not: See Gal. i. 8. 9.

III. It is impudent boldness, ignorance, and rashness, for men under whatsoever pretext, and seeming colour, to go and curtail the law, and only rule by which they ought to walk, both in point of doctrine and manners, and to impair that precious touch-stone, by which truth should

be discerned from error; seeing the apostle Paul maketh use of the Old Testament scriptures, to confirm what he was saying; for Paul's doing so teacheth us, that as Old Testament scriptures are of force and authority, even after Christ is both dead and risen again, to confirm new gospel-truths; so we may lawfully look upon the Old Testament (excepting what was ceremonial, representing, as a shadow, Christ the substance) as yet of force to direct us both in doctrine and manners, according to which we ought to walk; for Paul citeth the Psalms and Esaias's prophecy, to confirm his doctrine.

IV. That all by nature are sinful and corrupt, and so cannot walk in perfect conformity unto the law of God, and therefore cannot be justified by the works of the law, is a truth, which both law and gospel, Old and New Testament, do jointly, and with one consent, affirm: This is clear from Paul's proving this position from the Old Testament.

V. It is a duty lying on ministers, who hold forth truth unto people, and press them to duty, to examine well what they say, and press, by the unerring rule of the word, and to assert nothing but what they have a warrant for from the word of the Lord; they ought to speak nothing of their own head, but according as it is written: for even Paul an apostle (and so much more we, who are not so immediately inspired, and acted by an infallible Spirit, as he and the rest of the apostles were, 2 Pet. i. 21.) would bring forth nothing but what he had a warrant for; and therefore subjoins this, *as it is written*.

VI. Tho' one word of scripture be enough to persuade us of the truth of what is therein asserted, being the word of one who cannot lie; yet seeing the Lord hath condescended so far, as to give us such an ample and rich treasure, wherein not only is contained all things necessary for us to know, but even many things, especially such as are fundamental and most

necessary to be known, are frequently asserted, and again and again confirmed, that there may be no place left of doubting, and that they who will remain ignorant may be made so much the more without excuse, it is the duty of ministers, especially when they have to do with such as will hardly drink in those truths, having some prejudice at them, (as the Jews had at this, which Paul was asserting here,) to be much in inculcating these truths from scripture, and in bringing several testimonies, the more to confirm and clear the point, and the more to wind it in upon their consciences; considering of what necessity it is for them to be clear in these fundamentals, and necessary truths, and how busy Satan will be to juggle out these necessary points, and ward them off; after the apostle's example here, who contents not himself with one or two testimonies, tho' they had been sufficient for the confirmation of the truth, in such a fundamental point as this is, but useth many, from several places, to this purpose, some five or six.

VII. The Spirit of God speaking in the scriptures, by the mouth of his servants, is still the Spirit of truth, the same uniform Spirit, not speaking one thing by one, and the contrary by another; tho' blind man oftentimes cannot see the thread by which several truths are knit together: for we see David and Isaiah, tho' speaking at several times, upon several occasions, and for distinct purposes, yet both, as guided by one and the same unerring Spirit, do jointly set their shoulder to the upholding of this truth; and this should not a little confirm us of the divine authority of the scriptures, that we see such a harmony and concord among the penmen, who spoke as they were acted by the Holy Ghost, that there is not the least contradiction among them: this Paul teacheth us by citing David and Isaiah both, as setting to their seal unto this truth, which he was affirming.

VIII. A point may be a scripture truth, tho'

tho' it cannot be proved from ſcripture in ſo many words and ſyllables; and it is a moſt unreaſonable thing, and unwarranted in the word of God, to accept of nothing as ſcripture truth, but what is ſo proved, and to caſt at all truths, tho' confirmed by never ſo clear proofs drawn from ſcripture, by neceſſary conſequence; as if the meaning and reaſon of the text were not a better evidence, than the bare words without the meaning; and as if we were not commanded to ſearch into this mine, and to ſtudy the ſcriptures, that we may find out the Lord's mind, by comparing one place with another, 1 Cor. ii. 13. --- *Comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*: and as if nothing at all could be proved from ſcripture, nor no truth affirmed, or preached, but what were ſet down, in as many characters in the ſcriptures: for Paul, who knew the mind of the Spirit ſpeaking in the ſcriptures, and what was ſcripture, and what not, better than we, makes uſe of rational conſequences from ſcripture; and accounts it a ſcriptural truth, no leſs than if it were ſet down in as many ſyllables and words: for here he is to prove, that among the Jews there was *none righteous, no not one*; and among all the places brought by him to confirm this, there is not one of them that has it in as many ſyllables; only they prove it by neceſſary conſequence, and yet Paul in citing them ſays, *as it is written, or it is written there is none righteous, no not one*; to teach us, that we may no leſs ſay, that *that* is written, which is only drawn by conſequence from what is written, than that which is ſet down in expreſs terms. Moreover, when Paul ſaith rather the ſenſe than the words (for the words run thus, *The Lord looked down: ſee if there was any that did underſtand*, and Paul takes the meaning, and ſays, *There is none that doth underſtand*) he giveth us to know, that the meaning and ſenſe of ſcripture, and not the bare letter and ſyllables, is that which we ſhould take for ſcripture.

IX. It is very profitable and uſeful, for every one, to be often taking a lively view of their natural condition, and to be getting it convincingly and undeniably born in upon the conſcience, ſo as it may not be eaſily juſtled out, both as to the keeping of them humble, under enjoyments and privileges, and magnifying free grace in their eyes, that hath any reſpect to the like of them; and ſiting them for welcoming Jeſus Chriſt, and juſtification through him, without the works of the law: hence it is that Paul, having in the foregoing verſe ſaid, *We have proved both Jew and Gentile under ſin*, comes over it again in this tenth verſe, and ſays, *There is none righteous, no not one*.

X. Howbeit the pride of vain man be ſuch, that he would ſtill be at the way of winning to heaven by the covenant of works, and is averſe to the way of faith, and truſting to another for juſtification and ſalvation, and therefore is ſtill imagining a righteouſneſs in himſelf; yet it is an immoveable and unqueſtionable truth, and ſtill will be in all ages, that *there is none righteous, no not one*. However ſome may have more moral honeſty than others, and not be altogether ſo groſs; yea, and ſome thro' grace may be helped to more conformity unto the law; yet as to a full conformity, and ſuch a conformity as the covenant of works requireth, for the attaining of life by, this truth ſtandeth unſhaken, *There is none righteous, no not one*: There is none that dare plead the fulfilling of the law in their own perſon, no not the holieſt.

XI. There is ſuch a likeneneſs betwixt the godly and the wicked, in reſpect of their natures, all being pieces of one lump and maſs, that whatever is verified of the one, will hold true likewiſe of the other; and where-ever outbreakings and actual tranſgreſſions are, they may abundantly lead us in to know what a foul fountain nature is, that ſends forth corrupt muddy water: and hence it is, that one man's tranſ-

transgression will prove all unrighteous, in regard that one man's transgression will sufficiently prove that man's nature corrupt; for a corrupt tree hath corrupt fruit; and all men have one and the same nature, since Adam's breach of covenant: for thus argueth the apostle, from the iniquities of the wicked, mentioned in the places cited afterward, that *there is none righteous, no not one*; where also we see a necessity of Paul's making use of many consequences to prove this.

From the text cited OBSERVE,

I. As sin may so far prevail, as to cover the face of a visible church, and become universal, so as very few may be free of the contagion; so it should be matter of mourning, and a great regret unto God's own people, who have gotten grace to keep their garments clean, when the generality have corrupted their ways; as it was to godly David here, when he saw that the generality were gone wrong, it was a matter of heavy regret to him, and it went so near his heart, that he could not win off it, but came over it, and over it again, as being much affected therewith; therefore does he set it down in two several Psalms, viz. Psal. xiv. and liii. that *there is none that understandeth*, &c.

II. Howbeit carnal unregenerate men may seem to be prudent and provident enough, and *wise in their own generation*, and active enough in going about their worldly business; yet all their wit, how deep soever it be, in plotting and contriving things of state, or touching their own particulars, is but black ignorance before God: and for all the wit they have in their head, they are, in God's account, without knowledge and understanding, seeing they know not God in a saving, practical manner: therefore says he, *There is none that understandeth*; they are void of that knowledge which is only worth the name.

III. Whatever forms and out-side vizors wicked men may put on, to deceive

themselves; and however they may take up a formal, superficial way of serving God; yet with such God will not be mocked: but for all that, if they be not setting themselves to seek God diligently, assiduously, with all the heart, in the right manner, and for the right end, he will pass this judgment on them, that they are not seekers of God. And this neglect of right seeking after God, is a fruit and evidence of their ignorance of him: for let men profess what knowledge of God they please, if they be not taking pains to be savingly and heartily acquainted with God, their practice doth belye their profession: for with this, that *there is none that understandeth*, is joined, and *there is none that seeketh after God*.

IV. Tho' the Lord, in his wisdom and infinite goodness, hath carved out a way wherein a man ought to walk, and clearly delineated every step thereof; yet such is the wickedness of man by nature, as that he will not walk in that way, but stubbornly and proudly will turn aside, and rebel against God and his laws, and prove contumacious and refractory; and the constant course of wicked, unregenerate folks is out of the right path, and still aside: therefore it is added, *They are all gone out of the way*.

V. Folks rebellion, and swerving from the law of the Lord, and turning aside from the right ways of the Lord, is a necessary result and consequence of their want of saving knowledge and spiritual understanding, and of their neglect of seeking after God, as their end and happiness; when folks propose not a right end, they cannot take the right means: and therefore followeth, *they are all gone out of the way* upon their want of knowledge, and not seeking after God.

VI. As it is a honour and credit to man to be a constant follower of the Lord, and to be walking in his ways; so, however fools think, it is the high way to shame and disgrace, to be following a course of

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fection: for the same word which signifieth *to turn aside*, or *to rebel*, signifieth also, *to grow sour and tasteless*; to show, that such as make defection from God, they lose their beauty, their taste and relish, and become sour and unsavory.

VII. When once men cast off God and his service, and follow ways of their own, the Lord either blasts them, that they can do no good, neither in kirk nor commonwealth, or whatever they do is in no esteem with God, but altogether unprofitable: and the high way to render men base, naughty, rotten, unsavory, and usefess, is to turn their backs on God: for it is added, *they are become unprofitable*, and usefess, as stinking froath.

VIII. As sin is a most bewitching thing, enticing many; so were there never so many joining hand in sin, yea, even tho' the generality were going all one way, and following all one course of rebellion, their sin is no whit the less, nor will the bitter fruits of sin be any thing impaired; their numerousness will not prove a scone to save them for the deserts of sin: for, as there was many of them *together*, so, for all that, it is said, they were *altogether become filthy*, or *unprofitable*. There being many of them together in this guilt, did not save them from being all unprofitable, and becoming rotten and unsavory.

IX. The unprofitableness of the wicked is proved and made out by this, that they neither do, nor can do any thing that is good, or acceptable, and all that which they do is evil, and only evil, and continually evil; for while a man is unregenerate, and hath not fled in to Christ, there is nothing he doth, or can do, that is acceptable in God's eyes; for all his actions, civil, natural, moral, or christian, not being done in faith, are but *sin* before God, Rom. xiv. 23. therefore says the Psalmist, *There is none that doth good*.

X. However God may restrain some wicked men, as he did Abimelech from wronging Sarah, so as they become not

altogether so extravagant in their wicked courses, as others who take great delight in sinning, but, in point of morality, may be of a more tight, civil, polished life and conversation than the openly debauched; yet, nothing they do is acceptable in God's eyes, as long as they are out of Christ: therefore it is said, *There is none that doth good, no not one*, among all the unrenewed.

VERSE 13. *Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.*

THE next testimony is taken from Psal. v. 9. where David is dealing with God, that he would guide him by his counsel, for he had to do with enemies that were watching for his halting, and therefore he says, verse 8th, *Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face*. And this his petition he backs with arguments, taken from the nature and disposition of his enemies, which made his danger so much the greater; and among other things which he describeth them from, this is one: 1. That *their throat is an open sepulchre*: A metaphorical speech, but most significant, holding forth their blood-thirstiness, like an open grave ready to devour all the dead laid into it; and their insatiableness, that they can never be satisfied till they have him devoured; for *the grave is never satisfied*, Prov. xxx. 16. As also, holding forth their carnal threatenings, their throat belching out nothing but slaughter and destruction, as Prov. i. 12. and their horrible blasphemous speeches, which was like a filthy stinking smell, sent out from an opened grave. Or also, to hold forth their labouring to ensnare him, and their snares to entrap him, and so were like an open grave, which, in the night-time, is ready to ensnare folk, and to make them stumble. 2. He says, *They flatter with their tongues*; for so it is in the original;

ginal; but Paul, following the Seventy, has it thus, *With their tongues they have used deceit*, or laboured to deceive, or dealt deceitfully; but all is one, for flatterers use deceit: and having their tongues divided from their hearts, (as the word signifying *to flatter*, signifieth also *to divide* and *separate*) they make their words smooth as butter, and flatter, to the end they may deceive: So David says of these his enemies, they smooth and sweeten their words, as who but they, and yet they are but false and deceitful, labouring to deceive me, for they are but flatterers.

The *third* testimony, viz. *The poison of asps is under their lips*, is taken from Psal. cxl. 3. Where David is again troubled with his enemies, and goes to God for help and salvation, and says, verse 1st, *Deliver me, O Lord*; and for arguments he layeth forth the disposition and carriage of his enemies; and, among other things, says this of them, *That the poison of asps, or adders, is under their lips*. A very emphatic speech, to hold forth the cruelty of their wrath and indignation, and the maliciousness of their wrathful speeches: their wrath and indignation was hot and burning like fire, and so was as venom, which burns up and consumes the virals, for the word rendered *poison*, cometh from a verb signifying *to burn*. And, says he, *the poison of asps*; a worse kind of serpents, which, as some say, speweth out its venom afar off, and that most quickly; and tho' at first it tickle and delight the man whom it toucheth, yet presently it dispersteth the poison thro' all the veins, and striketh a man with a deadly sleep, and so killeth, for its wound is incurable, unless the part hurt be presently cut off; to shew the maliciousness and venomousness of his enemies, who spewed out damnable and virulent expressions, in their heat and rage, as deadly as the poison of the worst of serpents, killing afar off.

HENCE LEARN,

I. As all the unregenerate are sold un-

der sin, and lying under the dominion thereof by nature; so they are slaves and servants thereunto, and yield their *members weapons of unrighteousness*, and are nimble servants to Satan, with foot and hand, and all for him: for here we see that with all their members they work wickedness, *throat, tongue, lips, mouth, foot, and hand, &c.*

II. Such is the malice that wicked children of Satan have against the children of God, that they are still set on edge against them, seeking by all means to destroy them, and never will be in peace so long as they are undestroyed; so cruel and unmerciful are they, when they can get their mischievous purposes followed forth, and if God's grace preserved not his own out of their hands, they would be but like a dead man cast into an open grave; for *their throat is as an open sepulchre*.

III. As the heart of the unrenewed is full of rottenness, and wickedness; so, seeing *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*, their expressions are most unsavoury and corrupt, and as loathsome to God and the godly, as the stinking savour of a rotten grave; their discourses are not, for the most part, heavenly, but carnal, noughtry, filthy, and rotten; smelling of much rottenness and wickedness within: *Their throat is an open sepulchre*.

IV. So like are the unrenewed natural men unto their father the devil, that, as he was a *liar from the beginning*, so they have learned of him to flatter and deceive, for their own base ends, and can gloss over their devilish purposes and projects, with fair pretexts and words; and when they pretend most respect and kindness unto the Lord's children, they intend most mischief; for they *can flutter*, that they may deceive, *with their tongue*, and use deceit.

V. So strong and irreconcilable is the enmity, which is betwixt the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, that wicked, graceless, unrenewed souls have a heart hatred against the godly; *the*

they can hardly speak a good word of them, with good will; and when they dare vent themselves, and are countenanced in their wickedness, and encouraged, then they spue out the venom and poison of their hearts, and their devilish rage gets vent, and they express themselves most maliciously, and all their words are like sharpened arrows, dipped in most deadly poison, and thereby they would kill, if they could, both soul and body; for *the poison of asps is under their lips.*

VERSE 14. *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.*

THE fourth testimony is taken out of Psal. x. 7. where David is giving a description of the wicked; of whom he says, *Their mouth is full of cursing and deceit*; but Paul turns it here, *Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness*, therein following the Seventy, who possibly read *וּמְרִירוֹת* signifying *bitterness*, for *וּמְרִירוֹת* signifying *deceits*: However, hereby is held forth, what the nature of his enemies was; they were much given to horrible blasphemy, cursing, reviling, and false accusing, with oaths and horrible imprecations, with curses annexed: and all their words were bitter, false and fraudulent.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. It is a black mark of a child of Satan, and one in black nature, and under the bonds of sin, to be much given to cursing and swearing; reviling and menacing the children of God, accusing them, with horrible imprecations and curses, if their accusations be not true: And such is the serious wickedness of the enemies of God's children, that they will, with great boldness and confidence, lay false things to their charge, and with such and such curses light upon them, if all be not true which they say; for David's enemies had *their mouths full of cursing.*

II. Such as will not forbear to express

themselves bitterly and unbecomingly against God, but by their horrible blasphemies and cursings, will wrong his name, will not stand to wound the good name, and, by their amarulent, bitter speeches, hurt the credit and esteem of their neighbours: for with their cursing is joined *bitterness*, whereof their mouth is full also.

III. It is too great an evidence that men are given to use deceit and craftiness, and are set to wrong their neighbours by fraudulent dealing, when they are given to swearing, and all their expressions are backed with horrible oaths, and direful imprecations and cursings: for as *their mouth is full of cursing*, so of *deceit*, according to the Hebrew text.

VERSES 15. 16. 17. *Their feet are swift to shed blood.*

Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known.

THE fifth testimony is from Isa. lix. 7.

8. where the prophet is relating several of the enormities of that people, which were the cause of these sad calamities that did ly heavy upon them; and therefore says, *Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood:—wasting and destruction are in their paths, and the way of peace they know not.* Now, the apostle, in citing this place, sticks not at the words, but contents himself with the sense, and saith, *Their feet are swift to shed blood*, leaving out *innocent*, as the Seventy do. *Destruction* (or rather *contrition*, as the Greek word properly signifieth, which the Seventy and Paul use; the Hebrew word indeed signifieth *vastation, destruction, spoliation, rapine*; but the Greek word used by the Seventy, who possibly read *ῥ* with the point on the left side, signifying *contrition* or *bruising*, coming from a verb signifying *to break* or *bruise*, for *ῥ* with points on both sides, signifying *destruction* and *vastation*, signifieth

fieth *contrition, bruising, or the like*) and *misery* (or *calamity that cometh through continual and troublesome fightings*; and the Hebrew word signifieth such *contrition and fraction* as followeth *chewing*, for the same word signifieth both *meat* and *contrition*) *are in their paths*; their *ways*, and *causeys*, or *high streets*, as the same word is rendered, Isa. vii. 3. and xxxiii. 8. *And the way of peace have they not known.* By all which is held forth, their cruelty and bloodiness; they were prompt, and ready, and at a call, to shed innocent blood, as Prov. i. 16. they run violently after such sinful and cruel courses, and their common and ordinary way of walking is nothing but to waste and destroy, spoil and rob the poor, to break and crush them under their feet, as so many clods of earth; and to endeavour to bruise them in pieces, and chew them as small as meat; they are set on nothing but mischief and destruction, to ruin and vex, with continual fightings, the Lord's people; and this is their common beaten path'd road; and thus are they continually exercised, neither are they ashamed thereof: and as for peace they have no will of it, they like no motion thereof, they know not what it is to walk peaceably, and suffer others to prosper beside them; they desire to hear no overtures of peace, or any course that might breed peace; their minds are set on other courses.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Such delight and pleasure do the wicked take in their profane, godless courses, as they are never, as it were, in their element but when their hand is about some ill turn or other; and are most ready, and on the wing, to lay hold on the first opportunity to act their villainy; and how great and heinous soever the ill turn be, yet they fear not nor shrink; *their feet are swift even to shed innocent blood*: and whatever curied design and enterprize they

once imagine, they run violently, and are mad to get it done.

II. Such hatred and malice have the wicked conceived against the godly, that they cannot live in peace beside them; and so imbittered are their hearts against them, that they would take all courses to ruin, destroy, crush under feet, and grind them to powder, if they could; they carry such rancour and spleen at them, that they could even find in their heart to eat them with their teeth, and make pot-meat of them, and still are molesting them, and keeping them in hot water; for *destruction and misery are in their ways.*

III. Though it be but at some times wherein the Lord looseth the reins to the wicked to persecute the saints, and do the worst they may to them; yet it is their ordinary temper, and, when God restrains them not, it is their constant course, the ordinary beaten path wherein they walk for the most part; for *destruction and misery are in their ways*, their very high-ways. And the wicked may come to that height of impiety, as to avow and declare their wickedness; and always it is their trade and constant occupation to be one way or other breeding a fore heart to God's children, when they are their own men, and at liberty.

IV. It is a black mark of a wicked graceless man, to be delighting in contention and strife, and averse from peaceable motions and practices; for it is the wicked enemies of God who *have not known the way of peace*; they love best to fish in troubled waters, and peaceable times are no their world; and therefore are they active to sow sedition, and breed trouble to such as are about them; and, Ishmael-like, *their hand is against every man whom they see thriving beside them*; they love not that course which would procure peace, but still they would have their hand brewed in mischief; and therefore it is added, *The way of peace they have not known.*

VERSE 18. *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

THE last testimony is from Psal. xxxvi. I. where the prophet is making out this to be the common character of the wicked, that *they have not the fear of God before their eyes*, but are altogether grossly profane, contemners of God: And this being the ground and fountain-spring of all other vices, the apostle produceth it in the last place.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is an undeniable mark of a profane wretch, to shake off all fear and awe of God, and have atheistical thoughts dwelling in him, as if God were not taking notice of their carriage, or would not take course with them for their wicked acts; for, says he, *the fear of God is not before their eyes.*

II. The want of the lively sense and apprehension of a divine Majesty, taking notice of our carriage, and of every action we go about, is a main cause of folks running loose to all wickedness and abomination; and had we our hearts filled with the awe and dreadfulness of the Almighty, it were a notable mean to keep us from many gross outbreakings; for their *not having the fear of God before their eyes*, is brought in, in the last place, as the ground and main cause of all the rest; and the Psalmist, from whom it is brought, proves it by acts of iniquity, as its fruits and effects.

VERSE 19. *Now we know that what things sever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

IN this verse the apostle is loosing an objection which the Jews might have made against these testimonies which he produced, to the end that they might shun

the edge of his argument, and so shift the conviction. The objection might be this: Those testimonies which you have produced are not meant of us, we are not concerned in them, they strike not against us who are Jews, the peculiar covenanted people of God, but against the Gentiles, who are sinners. To this he replieth, from a maxim that they could not deny, seeing it was a clear unquestionable truth, that *what the law said, it said to them that were in it, or under it*; and so his reason stands thus: What the law says, it says to them who are under the law; this he takes for granted: But so it is that you are under the law; Therefore, &c. The assumption they could not deny, for the law was given to them, and made for their use and instruction; nor could they deny it, seeing they gloried of the law, as their peculiar privilege, and would not yield, that the Gentiles should be sharers thereof with them. So that it will clearly follow, that these things brought out of the Old Testament (which is here called the law, because it contained a rule unto which they should have conformed themselves; and all of it was either the law given by Moses, or an exposition or commentary thereof) speak home to the Jews, who lived under the law of Moses, and that polity; and whoever may plead exemption therefrom, they cannot, seeing this law was properly made for their use, and what it spoke to others, it was but by the bye, for they, and they only, were properly intended. From this the apostle infereth the conclusion which he hath been proving all this while, touching the Jews, viz. That they, no less than the Gentiles, are under sin, under the condemning power thereof, (of which he spoke, verse 9th) and thus concludeth of both Jews and Gentiles, that they are guilty before God; and this is the result of all the apostle's dispute, from verse 18th of the first chapter hitherto: which dispute we may shortly take up in this argument: If both Jews and Gentiles

have broken the law, and drawn upon themselves wrath, then are they guilty before God: this is clear and undeniable. But so it is that both Jews and Gentiles have done so, as is abundantly proven; therefore now it is concluded, that *all mouths are stoped*, wanting all shift and excuse; so that they have no ground of any just defence for themselves, the course of their subterfuges and shiftings is now damm'd up, (for the word properly signifies *to hedge up*) and *become guilty before God*, or found out to be so, or to ly under the sentence of condemnation. And that this last part of the verse may be so looked on as the conclusion, will be clear if we consider, that the particle *that* rendered *that*, importing a final cause, may be rendered, as well, *so that*, as being put for *as* as it is put sometimes, Rev. xiii. 13. and viii. 12. so, as some think, John v. 20. and, as others think, 2 Cor. i. 17. and vii. 9. Rev. ix. 20. and so here may be taken as a note of illation: yet it may be considered as another proof of the answer he gave unto the objection which might have been proposed thus, as if he had said, The law said those things which I brought out of it, to the end that all mouths might be stoped, and all the world might become guilty before God; and therefore the Jews must not be excepted here in the law, otherways they should not be found guilty. Or, more clearly, his argument might be conceived to be this: Those truths were set down in the law to stop some body's mouth, &c. but not to stop the Gentiles mouths; for, 1st, they had not that law made known to them; and, 2^{dly}, this needed not have been said to have convinced the Jews, how the Gentiles are guilty before God, because that was past all question with them, and a received maxim, that the Gentiles were sinners, as we see, Gal. ii. 15. *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles*: So that it must be mainly meant of the Jews; and if they be once proven guilty before

God, it will undoubtedly follow that the Gentiles are, and so the whole world is guilty before God. And so however the words be read, they will hold out these three things: 1. That these fore-cited testimonies are meant of the Jews, properly. 2. That hence followeth, that the Jews have no excuse, but are found guilty. And, 3. That all the world are in the same condition.

DOCTRINAL OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' of all proofs scripture proof is the most solid, strong, and convincing; yet so doth vain man swell with self-love, and so loth is he to take with guilt, and look upon himself as condemned, and as lying under the sentence of God's curse, that he will even find shifts to evade the clearest and fullest testimonies that can be: for tho' Paul had brought several testimonies out of the word of the Lord to prove the Jews guilty, yet we see how they labour to shift this evident demonstration, and have an objection against it, whereby to evade its force, which puts the apostle to subjoin an answer.

II. Among the many shifts that self-conceited and proud hypocrites make use of, to juggle out a conviction from the word, this is one, They imagine still, that the word which speaks so clearly, is to be understood of other folks, and not of themselves, and so wave all testimonies brought from the word, as not to be meant of them; they have such high thoughts of themselves, that they will not let it light, they are such as the word speaketh unto: for this was it, under which the Jews thought to shelter themselves from these testimonies, they would not have it said, they were meant of them, for this was their objection.

III. As there are none more ready to shift by challenges and convictions than such to whom they do most properly belong; so tho' such fools should imagine a freedom and exemption from these convincing truths

as not concerning them, yet such courses will prove but folly in the end: for albeit they thought these testimonies concerned them not, yet that availed not, for *the law did indeed speak to them, and they were guilty before God*, notwithstanding they did dream the contrary.

IV. Whatever purposes be handled in the word of the Lord, and whatever truths be there delivered, or whatever way they be proposed, yet we ought to look upon the whole as a law, having a binding power to regulate our practice, and to direct us in point of faith and doctrine: For here the whole Old Testament is called a *law*; and here the prophet Isaiah (and consequently all the rest of the prophets) is termed *the law*, and the Psalms also; so John x. 34. and xv. 25. so the historical part hath that name, Gal. iv. 21. and the law of Moses hath still that name.

V. So strong is the force of pride and self-love, where it gets vent, that it will make a man that is full thereof go over the belly of his own light, to lay down grounds whereupon to build his foolish hopes, and whereby to answer what might be produced for their conviction and recovery: for albeit they had this objection, that these testimonies touched not their case, yet they could not deny, if they would speak according to their own light, that the law spake to them; and therefore says Paul, *We know*, and so took it as a maxim that they could not get denied, *that what things soever the law says, it says to such as are under the law*.

VI. As the law of the Lord hath a commanding power over all unto whom it is given and prescribed; so hath it a speaking voice to reprove, accuse, threaten and condemn all contraveners; for thus this *law* is said to *speak* (viz. by convincing them of sin, and judgment for sin, as the scope of the forecited testimonies evidenceth) *to all that are in it; or under it*; and there is none that need plead exemption, or imagine freedom therefrom.

VII. When men once give way to vain thoughts, and will not impartially examine and pass sentence upon their condition, or estate before God, but will lay it down for a conclusion, that their estate is good enough, tho' it be not so; then their false hearts, set on work by Satan, will furnish them with abundance of false grounds whereupon to build their empty hopes, seeing that is all they desire; and they will have enough of such stuff furnished them, whereby to maintain their righteousness, so as their voluble tongues will be as fluent, as if they were as many mighty rushing waters; such will not be soon nonplused; as is clear by this metaphor of damming up their mouths, and hedging them up, which supposeth how violent these were in their defence, and how fertile their invention was to find out apologies and defences for themselves.

VIII. The law, thoroughly studied, and particularly applied, and mens actions and natures duly examined thereby, is sufficient to beat down all folks proud thoughts of themselves, and take from them all excuses and tergiversations, whereby they labour to shun any thorough conviction of their own unrighteousness, and lost condition: and when the doctrine of the law is brought home to folks consciences by the Spirit, it will lay their boasting of their own righteousness, and cause them lay their hands upon their mouths, and cry, *guilty*: so the right way to convince folk of their natural condition, is to hold forth the law, for it is *by the law*, and what it says, *that mouths are stopped, and all found out to be guilty*.

IX. To be guilty, and so liable to God's curse, is not the condition of a few only, but even the natural condition of all, be they privileged outwardly, or not: it is the common case and condition of all ranks, qualities and conditions of people, of whatsoever language, nation or kindred they be; the whole mass of mankind is guilty, and lying under the curse, since

Adam,

Adam, the root of mankind, violated the covenant of life: for here Paul asserts it as a truth, that *all mouths are stoped*, and so have nothing to apologize for themselves that will have weight, *and all the world is guilty*.

X. Howbeit many may find shifts to deceive themselves, and others like themselves, and so have nothing to say in defence of their own righteousness, and will neither believe themselves, nor let others say, that they are in nature, or under God's curse, but still give out themselves to be in a better condition than indeed they are in; yet when the cause comes before God, who searches the heart, they will then be found to be what they are: and therefore he says, *before God*.

VERSE 20. *Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

HERE beginneth the third part of this chapter; wherein the apostle is prosecuting the farther probation of his former thesis, and for that cause produceth several other arguments, to the end.

But before he proceeds to any new argument, having now insisted long upon his first, he lays down the thesis in plain terms, *viz. That by the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified before God*: and this he setteth down by way of a conclusion following from what he had been saying formerly, in prosecution of this second argument, which we shewed, chap. i. 18. might be this; If any body could be justified by the law, then either the Jews or Gentiles should be justified by the law; this is clear, seeing there is not a third: But neither Jews nor Gentiles can be so justified, and this he hath hitherto sufficiently proved; and hence now concludeth, that *by the deeds of the law no flesh should be justified*, &c. Where, by *deeds of the law*,

is meant, obedience to the whole law of God, whether ceremonial or moral, written or unwritten; for hitherto hath he spoken of the transgressors of the moral law, and not of the ceremonial only; and he hath also spoken of the Gentiles who never knew the ceremonial law, and if he did not mean the moral law, his argument would be fallacious; for so he should speak of the moral law in the premises, and of the ceremonial (which is distinct) in the conclusion, which were a false way of arguing. And, moreover, he must mean the same law whereof he made mention, verse 19. for by whatsoever law it is that mens mouths are stoped, and they declared guilty, by that same law, or obedience thereto, none can be justified. Neither is it the ceremonial law, properly, which convinceth of sin, save only secondarily; but of such a law doth he here speak, by which is the knowledge and conviction of sin, properly. And lastly, the ceremonial law points out God's righteousness, even Christ, who is *our righteousness*, and is *the end of the law for righteousness*; now the apostle meaneth such a law here as doth not hold forth this righteousness, as is clear in the following verse. *No flesh*; that is, no man, by a figure, Eph. vi. 12. Matth. xxiv. 22. and often elsewhere: and farther it implieth *corruption*, as Rom. viii. 1. 3. Rom. vii. 8. (and so signifieth man corrupted, John. iii. 6.) and *infirmities*, which it signifieth, Heb. v. 7. And the apostle useth this phrase, to shew, what the condition of all without Christ is, nothing but a lump of flesh and corruption, full of weakness, and sinful infirmities, unfit to do any thing that is good: and so by this term he shews, that he speaks only of man, as he is now corrupted since Adam's fall: And thus, indeed, the question is to be understood; for before the fall man would have been justified by the deeds of the law, if he had fully conformed himself thereunto; and this he might have done, having power for that effect. And the

the apostle addeth, *before God*; that is, in his judgment, as opposed to man's judgment, at whose bar men may be justified, Rom. iv. 2. for that may pass as current before men, which cannot endure God's strictest judgment, that vain hypocrites may not think to deceive God as they do men, seeing in God's eyes *the heavens are not clean*, Job iv. 18. and xv. 15. and xxv. 5. and he *searcheth the heart*. By being justified he means, not having righteousness infused, for then there would be no sense in the words, nor truth either; to say, that by the works of the law no man shall have inherent righteousness before God; but such an act whereby we have our sins pardoned, are acquitted and absolved from sin and death, and declared righteous in God's sight; and thus the word is taken, Job ix. 20. Rom. viii. 33. 34. Gal. iv. 16. 17. and iii. 8. Prov. xvii. 15. for the apostle is about to shew, how poor sinful flesh, now lying under guilt, and liable to death, may win free, and be absolved, and looked upon as just before God.

Beside this conclusion, there is an argument in the verse, to enforce it; which may either be looked upon as a new argument, or as the last summed up in short: however it is this, If by the law be the knowledge of sin, then by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified before God: this is clear, for he speaketh of such a knowledge as convinceth, and makes us guilty before God, and so holds forth God's wrath and curse: but so it is, that by the law is the knowledge of sin; where, by the law he means both the law of nature, and the written law, and all law, seeing it hath no article added in the original; and this law discovers the least and most obscure sin, especially the written law discovereth concupiscence, and such like; and the very original and foul fountain of every vice, both as to want of our original understanding in our judgments, and rectitude in our wills and affections, and to the having of contrary habits; so that we

cannot be justified by the deeds of that law, which discovereth so much guilt, deserving condemnation.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Though man by the guilt of Adam hath utterly lost that righteousness, in which once he was created, and whereby he looked like God, this being a part of the image of God, Eph. iv. 24. and now is become altogether unrighteous, and of himself utterly incapable of ever appearing before the Judge as righteous; yet God hath found out a way, and there is a possibility how, the unrighteous may appear righteous; and there is such a glorious privilege as justification attainable, and the apostle is here proving the right way of attaining to it.

II. Man would still be at a way of his own, whereby to attain unto this privilege of justification, Luke xviii. and such a high account have they of their actions, and religious performances, (not knowing, or not considering, what a just God they have to do with, what a pure law they will be tried by one day, what a lump of corruptions sticks to every thing they do, so that of all their actions there shall not one be found able to abide a trial, when it is examined according to its principal motive and end) that they cannot be gotten convinced of an impossibility of ever being justified by themselves: as it is hard to get some convinced of this in opinion, so it is harder to get more convinced of it in practice: therefore it must be concluded, and again concluded, and proven, and proven over again.

III. The best way to get souls convinced of a necessity of following the right way, of justification without themselves, is, to convince them once of their natural condition, how they stand guilty before God. If souls would study this well, and be thoroughly convinced thereof, they would more heartily close with this doctrine, that *by the works of the law, no flesh should be justified*

justified before God; and therefore Paul takes this course, if you look the verse preceding.

IV. It is a matter of great consequence, as being a fundamental point, and a thing absolutely necessary, to be clear in the right way of our justification before God, and therefore a concerning point, to be well studied, and accordingly practised by all; therefore doth the apostle insist so much upon it, as being the marrow of doctrinal practical divinity.

V. It is now a concluded truth, and should be entertained without any farther scruple or dispute, that *by the deeds of the law*, which requireth absolute and universal perfection, and curseth every man by nature for the least breach thereof, Deut. xxvii. 26. and will not descend from its perfect exactness, *no man breathing shall be justified*, seeing the Spirit of the Lord, by the apostle, hath now concluded it from unanswerable arguments.

VI. Man is so far (now since the fall, whatever he was before) from having any ground in himself whereupon to expect justification, that, on the contrary, he is nothing but a lump and mass of base, sinful, corruptible, and corrupted flesh; and were this well considered, it might lay our boasting, that all our excellent and glorious title is to be called *flesh*.

VII. Much of our ignorance of our sinful condition, of the sinful nature of many of our actions, of the vileness and abominableness of sin, and of the just and dreadful desert thereof, floweth from our being strangers to the law: and much humble and diligent study of the law, would help us to discover many latent corruptions, and to be better acquainted with the stratagems of sin, and the dangerous snares we are drawn into thereby; for, *by the law is the knowledge of sin*.

VIII. The law's discovering man's corruptions and short-comings, and their hazard, thro' the curse which is annexed to every breach, may abundantly convince

them of their folly in expecting justification by the deeds of that law; for this is the force of the argument, *for by the law is the knowledge of sin*; and so by it we are accused and condemned.

IX. Seeing man's heart is but deceitful, and ready to bless himself in an evil course; and the judgment of all men, who can but observe the outside, is fallible and uncertain, and it is God who searcheth the hearts and the reins, and it is at his bar alone where we must appear, and by his judgment must we stand or fall; therefore we should be labouring and studying most earnestly, how we may pass current before him: therefore it is added, *in his sight*. And were the contrariety which is betwixt God and man better considered, how he is *a God of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity*; and man is but a piece of base corruption and sinful flesh, we would not think so much of our own righteousness as we do; therefore are *no flesh*, and *before him*, (which hath a great emphasis) put in opposition.

VERSES 21. 22. *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;*

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference.

HERE is a principal argument against justification by works; whereby, at length, he sheweth the right way of justification: and, withal, coucheth in a comparison betwixt the open and plain exhibition of Christ now under the gospel, with the way how he was held forth of old, *viz.* by types, sacrifices, and prophecies. The argument may be in this or the like form: If the only way by which poor sinners must stand justified before God, be a way which the law hath no hand in the manifestation of, nor is helped any

any jot by those works which the law requireth, then we cannot be justified by the law. This is clear; for sure were we justified by the law, the works done in obedience to the law would avail, and the law would clear the way of justification to us, without seeking to any other: But so it is that the only way by which poor sinners must stand justified before God, is a way which the law doth not manifest, nor help forward; Therefore, &c. This proposition he proves thus: 1st, That way which God hath invented, and which he will be pleased with, whereby sinners must stand justified before him, is the only way: But so it is that that way is not held forth by the law; Therefore, &c. And 2^{dly}, thus, That way of justification which both Moses in the law, and the prophets, bare witness unto, is the only true way: But the way which they bore witness unto was without the law; Therefore, &c. Afterward, in the 22^d verse, he cleareth what that only way is.

So then in short the meaning of the apostle is this; Now, in the days of the gospel, wherein Christ is held forth in a more clear and full manner than he was under the law, that righteousness by which we must stand justified, which is a righteousness of God's own invention and gift, and a righteousness which he will only rest satisfied with, is revealed, and clearly published, and no more lying hid under promises and legal shadows, but really and openly exhibited now, when *the fulness of time is come*, Gal. iv. 4. and that *without the law*, which doth not speak on it of set purpose, but presseth obedience, whether it be moral or natural, (for of this law alone he speaks) and yet this is no novelty, or a way that was never heard of before, but a way which Moses (whose writings are here meant by the law, as Luke ii. 23. and x. 16. Acts xxiv. 14) and all the prophets assented unto, and bare witness of.

In the next verse he farther explains what this way of justification is, and shew-

eth, that this righteousness is none of our own inventing, but it is the righteousness of God, and a righteousness which is given, imputed, and made over unto, and put upon believers; and believers of whatsoever nation, kindred, or language they be of, Gentiles as well as Jews; *it is bestowed upon, and imputed unto all them that believe*: And the way and means how this gift becometh believers's, and they have interest therein, and are clothed therewith, is, *by faith of Jesus Christ*. And this way of believing in Christ, and resting upon him, is the only way, and an excellent way too; and therefore once signifying it, will not suffice; so doth he say *unto all*, and again *upon all them that believe*, that this comfortable doctrine unto the Gentiles might be the better believed, and the pride of the Jews the more laid, who thought none would have been justified but they.

HENCE LEARN,

I. Man will not come cleanly over to Christ, and absolutely renounce all hopes and expectations of relief through his own skill and ability, until the force of need drive him, and he see he must either do that or die: therefore the most safe and hopeful way of gaining souls to Christ, is to hew down all their carnal pillars, and solidly hunt them out of all their holes; and, in particular, to clear the utter impossibility of their ever getting relief by their own doings. This is clear in Paul's method, he first cuts off all their vain conceits of themselves, and sheweth the impossibility of being justified by works, and then pointeth forth Christ: he clears the ground before he lays the walls.

II. Ministers, and such as deal with consciences, should not rest upon a bare discovery of folks danger, but should also point out the way to life; they should not think it enough to loose their grips of that which is wrong, but also they should fasten them to that which is right: it were good

to be fastening the one hand as we loose the other, for man would still grip at something. Thus doth Paul no sooner discover the error of expecting salvation by works, but he as soon pointeth forth the right way of justification by faith in Christ.

III. God hath so contrived the way and manner of sinners justification, as man might be no sharer of the glory of the work; for it did not breed in his breast; it is not his righteousness, but God's, in which he must appear; and as he had no hand in the contriving and procuring of this, so had he no hand so much as in publishing it: for it was a hidden mystery, and still would have been hid from the knowledge of man, if God had not made it manifest: therefore he says, *this righteousness of God is now made manifest.*

IV. Tho' such was God's goodness to his church in all ages, as he did not leave them without some measure of knowledge of the right way of salvation; yet it seemed good unto the most wise God, for holy and wise ends, to let out the knowledge of this mystery of salvation but sparingly, and darkly, as under a vail of ceremonies, and through a lattice of dark prophecies and types, unto the church under the law, 2 Cor. iii. 13. *And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:* so as even they who knew most of the mystery were necessitated to use a farther inquiry and search, and to double their diligence in prying into the meaning of the types and shadows, under which the mystery was wrapped; 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12. *Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, &c.* So, Matth. xiii. 17. --- *Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see*

those things which ye see, and have not seen them, &c. And to reserve the full and clear breaking up of this hidden mystery unto the days of the gospel, in which it is clearly and fully manifest: for now, says the apostle, *the righteousness of God is revealed;* as if, comparatively, it had never been revealed before: See Ephes. iii. 5. 9.

V. As under the law, when gospel mysteries were darkly held forth, it had been a deadly guilt, and a fundamental error, to have looked for salvation or justification by the works of the law; so it is no less now, nay rather a more heinous doing of injury unto the Spirit, that now shineth so clearly, and manifesteth saving truths so fully, and affronting of God, who hath dispelled the former clouds, and blown by the mist, and taken away the vail: what an abominable thing is it, willingly to wander at the noon-tide of the day; for the apostle bringeth this forth, as an argument which might sufficiently confute that error, *Now the righteousness of God is revealed;* and therefore, would he say, away with thinking to be justified by works.

VI. Tho', according to the draught and tenor of the covenant of works, the Lord appointed the works of the law to have been the way unto salvation; yet now under the covenant of grace, wherein God has drawn a quite contrary draught, the works of the law stand in a diametrical opposition unto the righteousness of God, cannot solder together, in any measure, in the matter of being the price of our redemption, or in making up that which might answer justice; for here the apostle maketh the one shut out the other, so Phil. iii. 9. Hence these two righteousnesses have different phrases in scripture; the one is called, *the righteousness of God*, Rom. i. 17. and x. 3: *Righteousness which is of God*, Phil. iii. 9. *Righteousness by the faith of Christ*, as here; and *through the faith of Christ*, Phil. iii. 9. *Righteousness in Christ's blood*, Rev. v. 9. *Righteousness*

ousneſs not ours, Phil. iii. 9. and *righteousneſs imputed*, Rom. iv. 6. 10 11. The other is called, *righteousneſs by works*, *righteousneſs of the law*, Rom. ii. 26. and *by the law*, Gal. iii. 21. and *our righteousneſs*, Rom. x. 3.

VII. Tho' the law, being rightly ſeen and ſtudied, might ſerve to convince folk of their guilt and danger, and ſo be as a ſpur in their ſides, to preſs them to run out of themſelves for help and relief; yet of itſelf, it could never have pointed forth the way to ſalvation, but have left folk in the mire; for *the righteousneſs of God is revealed without the law*: It is the goſpel only which points out the way.

VIII. As miniſters, and all others, ſhould beware to broach new errors, it being a *work of the fleſh*, Gal. v. 20. ſo ſhould they deliver the truths of God in the approved form of ſound words: as their doctrine ſhould be ſound, 1 Tim. i. 10. Tit. i. 9. ſo in delivering their doctrine they ſhould *hold faſt the form of ſound words*, 2 Tim. i. 13. that they may not, upon any juſt ground, be ſuſpected of venting new-coined doctrines: Therefore doth the apoſtle Paul prevent their miſtaking his doctrine for novel, he addeth, *being witneſſed by the law and the prophets*.

IX. The doctrine of juſtification by the righteousneſs of another, without the deeds of the law, is no novelty, but a doctrine held forth in the church in all ages, even under the law, before Chriſt came; this was witneſſed unto, though darkly and obſcurely, by the many promiſes, Gen. iii. Deut. xviii. and in Iſaiah; prophecies, ſacrifices, types and ceremonies, that then was: ſo that then, and now, there was, and is, but one way of juſtification: *It is witneſſed by the law and the prophets*.

From Verſe 22d OBSERVE,

I. That the righteousneſs for which a ſinner muſt be accepted, is a righteousneſs not inherent in man, nor deviſed by man, but invented by God, and the righteousneſs

of one who is God, (for the words may bear this ſenſe) as it is in itſelf a matter of admiration, and a truth moſt neceſſary to be believed, tho' hard to be underſtood, and ſubmitted unto; ſo ſhould it be received with all carefulneſs, and not forgotten: all which the apoſtle teacheth us, when he comes over it again, and ſays, *Even the righteousneſs of God*.

II. This righteousneſs by which we muſt ſtand juſtified and accepted in the day of accounts, being inherent in another than in ourſelves, muſt be made over to us, and accepted by us, otherways we cannot be juſtified thereby; therefore it is ſaid, that *it is unto*, and *upon* all that believe.

III. The only way by which this righteousneſs of Chriſt is made over to us, and accepted by us, is faith in Jeſus Chriſt; therefore it is called the righteousneſs *which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt*. Before we can have any right to any thing in Chriſt, we muſt become one with him, and be eſpouſed to him; we muſt *receive him*, John i. 12. be joined to him as our head, lay hold on him, and lean to him: Hence it is called the *righteousneſs of faith*, Rom. ix. 30. and iv. 11. 13. and *a righteousneſs through faith*, Phil. iii. 9. and *by faith*, ibid. Faith being a receiving of Chriſt as he is offered in the goſpel, is that noble grace which entitles us to Chriſt, and all the privileges which come along with him.

IV. Tho' the Lord had decreed from eternity, for whom in particular Chriſt ſhould ſaſiſy, and ſo purchaſe a righteousneſs, and in due time Chriſt did lay down his life for thoſe, and none elſe; yet in the depth of the wiſdom of God, the matter of the covenant is ſo contrived, as that this righteousneſs ſhall never be legally made over and accounted theirs, until they believe; they never receive it, nor any fruits of it, till firſt they believe; and then it is, and not till then, that this righteousneſs *is unto* and *upon* them, viz. when they believe; *by faith it is unto and upon them*. Gal. iii. 26. 27. *For ye are all the children*

children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, &c.

V. Believers, and none but believers, even such as have received Christ in the gospel, and welcomed him in their hearts, and have submitted to him upon his own terms, are heirs of this righteousness, and persons to whom it properly belongs: for it is *to them that believe*.

VI. Whoever will flee in to Jesus Christ offered in the gospel, and anchor their souls on this Rock of Ages, may be assured, that that righteousness of God which he hath purchased, shall be theirs; it shall be given to them, and put upon them: and therefore he says, it is *unto all that believe*. And, as if that would not satisfy, nor be enough to make it true, he adds, *and upon all*, &c. as if he could not get expressions enough, and fit enough, to set out its certainty.

VII. So large and free is this covenant of grace, that whosoever will come shall be welcome; there are none excepted that mind to come; whoever believeth, be they Jew, be they Gentile, for now *the middle wall of partition is broken down*, Eph. ii. 14. and whatever they have been formerly, they shall now be welcome, and all shall be alike sharers, be they weak or strong in the faith, if they have *the like precious faith*, 2 Pet. i. 1. the righteousness of God shall be a cloathing to them; for it is *upon all them that believe, and there is no difference*.

VIII. Jesus Christ and his righteousness is the common stock of all believers, in all ages, of all sizes; they all wear one and the-self same garment, and bought with one and the self same price: for it is this one *righteousness of God*, which is *unto and upon all them that believe*.

VERSE 23. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*

THE apostle having formerly said, that there was no difference betwixt Jew and Gentile, as to the way of being justified before God; and knowing, upon

the one hand, that it would be matter of great comfort unto the Gentiles, to be assured that it were true; and, upon the other hand, the proud Jew would hardly let it light; he doth now prove, that the way of justification is but one to both: and that by this argument, all, both Jew and Gentile, are alike in the mire, and therefore the way to come out again must be alike; *all have sinned* actually against God, and so are *become* guilty, beside the sinfulness of their nature, which they were born with. *They have come short of the glory of God*; that is, they have now lost all strength and ability, having their understandings corrupted, and wills depraved, of ever attaining, through their own strength and industry, their former condition and felicity; they have sinned up in the race, and cannot attain that life of glory in communion with God, which the Lord at first proposed as their end; for it is a metaphor taken from folks falling behind, and sitting up in a race.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. That the children of God be not glad at a thing of naught, and that their joy and rejoicing may be solid and serious, the servants of God should endeavour, that whatever matter of comfort they hold forth, be well grounded, lest they be thought to deceive them with vain fancies; and therefore Paul would not only say, that the Gentiles might expect justification the same way with the Jews, but he would prove it, that their joy at such glad tidings might be the more solid and grounded.

II. It is dangerous to foster any root of pride or self-conceitedness in people, and therefore the servants of the Lord should be careful to dig the bottom out of their false grounds and principles, as the apostle doth here; knowing that the Jews swelled with pride because of their privileges; and of this one among others, that they had a shorter cut to salvation and justification than the poor Gentiles: he not only de-

nies this, but also gives his reason why.

III. The common lot of all men, privileged and not privileged, rich and poor, of whatever nation, kindred, and language they be of, is this, that they *have sinned*, and so are become guilty before God.

IV. Such is the wonderful love and condescendence of God, that though he might have created man, and left him without any hopes of ever enjoying himself, for his portion; yet he was pleased to offer life and glory to man, upon conditions which sometime were in his power: for here there is *the glory of God*, which man might have attained.

V. All men and mothers children have sitten up, and run short of their race, and lost all the hopes they had of attaining that glorious life of communion with God, which once they started fair for; for *all have come short of the glory of God*.

VI. All men of whatsoever quality and rank, being now plunged in one and the same gulph, must all also come forth at one and the same door; all being alike condemned and cursed, must be alike justified: for this is the force of his reason by which he proves, that there is no difference betwixt Jew and Gentile, in the way of being justified, because *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*.

VII. Howbeit men take pleasure in sin, and act it with great delight and complacency, and imagine great gain to themselves thereby; yet it is that which doth cut folks from heaven and glory, and procurereth that incomparable loss; for *all have sinned, and then have come short of the glory of God*.

VIII. As justification by grace respecteth sinners, that have thereby shot short of heaven; so the best way for us to embrace this way of justification, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, by faith, is to be made sensible of this our sinfulness, and misery, in losing all well grounded hopes of heaven: for the object of justi-

fication is such as *have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*.

VERSE 24. *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.*

ANother main proof of the principal thesis is here; which also serves to confirm what he had said in the last verse. The principal thesis is thus confirmed: 1. If we be justified freely by grace, then are we not justified by works; and this is clear, for otherways *grace is no more grace*, as he says; Rom. xi. 6. But so it is that we are justified freely by grace; Therefore, &c. 2. Thus: If we be justified through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, then we are not justified by works; for we cannot be justified by a price laid down by another, and a price paid by ourselves: But so it is that we are justified through the redemption that is in Christ; Therefore, &c. This also confirmeth what he had said, verse 23d, *viz. That we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, thus: If we cannot be justified, and consequently saved, but by God's free grace, thro' the redemption that was made by another, then, of ourselves, have we all come short of glory: But the former is true; Therefore, &c. So then here this noble privilege of justification is farther described and explained, *first*, from the inward impulsive cause, the free grace of God; his free undeserved mercy and goodness, which is the fountain from whence floweth pardon, righteousness, and salvation: and so seeing grace, and free grace, is opposed to debt, Rom. iv. 4. it excludes all our works, whether before or after faith, from making up any part of this price; as also, all our preparations. *Next*, from the outward impulsive cause, or the meritorious price; and that is, the redemption which is in Christ; a wonderful redemption indeed! And so there is an emphasis here; it is that redemption,

redemption, even that *which is in Christ*; that spiritual redemption which was by price, whereby we were freed from guilt, the curse of God, the law, Satan, and death.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. That God passeth the sentence of absolution upon us freely, may abundantly confirm and persuade us, that we have sinned, and are become guilty before God, and that we shall never be accepted for any thing in ourselves; and to expect justification through our own works, is to cry down the freedom of God's grace, in absolving and justifying of us: for, as we shewed in the explication, this proves both.

II. Justification is an act of God's free grace, he freely, and of his own free grace and good-will, purposing and decreeing to justify, in his own time and way, for even *election is of grace*, Rom. xi. 5. and *according to his own good pleasure*, Eph. i. 5. 6. 9. 11. and there being nothing required of us, in way of satisfaction, in whole or in part; and there being no prerequisite or preparatory dispositions that merit it at God's hand: therefore are we said to be *justified freely*, and by some thing without us, *viz. the redemption of Christ*: for *freely* excludes both *price*, Matth. x. 8. 2 Thei. iii. 8. and *merit*, John xv. 25. See Rom. viii. 30. 32. Isa. xliii. 26.

III. Much of God's grace, condescendency, love and good-will, is manifested in this matter of justification: For, 1st, Whereas he might, as a just Judge, have pursued sinners according to the rigour of the law, yet he was pleased to dispense with it, or relax it; that is, take away the obligation of the law in force, as to certain persons and things, *viz. the proper subjects of the penalty, the parties offending*; and so was content of a satisfaction rendered by a cautioner, which he might have exacted of themselves, Eph. v. 2. 2^{dly}, In that he himself provided this Cautioner and Ransom-payer, and sent him. And, 3^{dly}, In that this Cautioner was his own

only begotten Son, and yet he sent him out of the bosom of his love; John iii. 16. Heb. ii. 9. Rom. v. 8. 9. Tit. ii. 11. and iii. 4. 1 Tim. ii. 5. 6. 4^{thly}, In that he put this only Son of his love to death for our justification, Rom. iv. 25. 5^{thly}, And made over that righteousness of his to us, Heb. x. 10. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. i. 18. 19. Isa. liii. 4. 5. 6. 10. 11. 12. 6^{thly}, Only upon the condition of faith, Rom. iii. 25. And, 7^{thly}, In that he bestoweth this same faith, Eph. i. 7. Therefore we are said to be *justified by his grace*.

IV. Whatever privilege and liberty once we had, yet now, by reason of sin, all is mortgaged, and we are captives under the justice of God, lying under the curse, Gal. iii. 13. Satan being our jailor, and death our prison, Heb. ii. 14. 15. and are held under by sin and wickedness, Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 18. And, moreover, are unable to relieve ourselves, or procure our own redemption. All this is suposed in the word *redemption* here, which is a redemption made by another, even *Christ*.

V. Whatever God might have done, if we speak of his absolute power not limited by a decree, yet now having made a law, according to which he purposed and determined to walk with man, and being a *righteous God*, Psal. clxv. 17. and xi. 7. and a *righteous Judge*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Gen. xviii. 25. who *cannot behold iniquity*, Hab. i. 13. nor *hath pleasure in it*, Psal. v. 4. and *so will not acquit the guilty*, Exod. xxxiv. 7. he could not suffer sin to go away unpunished, nor suffer man to win free without a satisfaction. This is also implied in the word *redemption*. There was a necessity that a satisfactory ransom should be paid, because of the law, Gen. iii. which God would not abrogate or annul, nor yet dispense with altogether.

VI. This price of redemption was laid down by Jesus Christ the second person of the Trinity, who came in the likeness of sinful flesh, Heb. ii. 14. 17. and *took upon him the form of a servant*, Phil. ii. 7.

and was made under the law, Gal. iv. 4. perfectly fulfilling the same, Matth. iii. 15. and v. 17. and suffered in soul and body, Matth. xxvi. 37. 38. and chap. xxvii. and died, Phil. ii. 8. and satisfied justice, Eph. v. 2. It was he who gave himself a ransom, 1 Tim. ii. 6. and we are redeemed by his blood, 1 Pet. i. 18. 19. see Gal. iii. 13. 2 Cor. v. 21, Eph. i. 7. For this redemption is said to be in Christ. See 1 Cor. vi. 20. Rev. v. 9. and xiv. 3.

VII. This price which Christ did lay down, is the only meritorious price, and meritorious cause of our justification; in him alone we have redemption, Eph. i. 7. he has trade the wine-press alone, and of all the people there was none to help him, Isa. lxiii. 3. in him alone is the Father well pleased, Matth. xvii. 5. The law could help nothing, being weak through the flesh, but God sending his only Son---for sin condemned sin in the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, Heb. vii. 19. ---Gifts and sacrifices could not make them that did the service perfect, as to the conscience,---But Christ being come, &c. Heb. ix. 11. see Heb. x. 4.---10. Therefore it is said, that we are justified through the redemption that is in Christ.

VIII. That there is a price laid down, which is the meritorious cause of our justification, doth no way hurt or obscure the gracious freeness thereof; for though it be free as to us, who contributed nothing thereto, Tit. iii. Rom. iv. 5. yet it cost Christ his life: its freedom is to be understood in respect of us, and not in respect of Christ, who bought it with his blood. It is true, real pecunial debts are no more debts when once reparation and satisfaction is made; but in personal offences, satisfaction and remission may consist; yea, satisfaction here makes way for pardon, and is subservient thereto: for when satisfaction is made, the offended must moreover leave off to be any more displeased: And this is an act of the will, and

so is pardon, distinct from the satisfaction made. For here the apostle joineth both in one verse, saying, *We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ*: Thereby shewing, that the price impairs not the freedom, nor its freedom diminisheth not the price: yea, the apostle's words would rather prove, that our justification were free, because it is through the redemption of Christ, and that upon a double account: 1. When God might have entered into judgment with man's self, according to the rigour of justice, he was content to pass from him, and seek reparation in another. And, 2. In that when he might have refused the satisfaction offered, he sat down contented therewith, and thereupon justified sinners. See more, Doct. 3d.

IX. Christ Jesus did properly redeem us by doing and suffering what he did; we were captives, kept under justice, law, Satan, death, and the grave, as our goal; and he comes, by laying down his life a ransom, to set us at liberty: hence it is called a redemption, Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. Luke ii. 38. and he is said to redeem, Luke i. 68. see also Heb. ix. 12. so is it called a ransom, Mark x. 45. Matth. xx. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 6. so is he said to deliver, 1 Theff. i. 10. Col. i. 13. In every proper redemption there is, 1st, Captives, and we are such, Isa. lxi. 1. and xlii. 7. and xlix. 9. 25. Zech. ix. 11. Yea, and in bondage, Heb. ii. 15. 2^{dly}, Some cause deserving imprisonment, as debt or offences; now sin is both a debt, Matth. vi. 12. and v. 25. 26. and a crime. 3^{dly}, A principal creditor and king; and here is God, Matth. vi. 12. Psalm li. 4. James iv. 12. Psalm x. 16. and he it is that imprisoneth principally, Rom. xi. 32. Satan is only the officer or jailor, and sin is only the fetters. 4^{thly}, A delivery out of prison; so here we are freed from the curse of God, the power of Satan and sin, 2 Tim. ii. 26. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 18. Gal. iii. 13. Rom. v. 9. Heb. ii. 15. Hos. xiii. 14. 5^{thly}, A delivery by price; so here is a price,

even blood, Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 18. 19. Heb. ix. 14. 1 John i. 7. Col. i. 14. Eph. i. 7. *6thly*, The price must be paid to him who detaineth; so is it here paid to God, for he only it is who detaineth the captives by jurisdiction, right, law, and power; and it is from his *wrath* we are delivered, 1 Theff. i. 10. and his *curse*, Gal. iii. 13. and his *law*, Gal. iv. 4. see these two exprefs texts, Eph. v. 2. Heb. ix. 14. And, *lastly*, it must be accepted; and so it is here, for his sacrifice was a *sweet smelling savour to God*, Eph. v. 2. Moreover, we find that his death and sufferings were properly punishments, and thereby satisfaction was made to God for us; as is clear, Isaiah liii. He was *afflicted, bruised, wounded, and chastised*, and that not for his correction, for *he had done no violence; he was cut off, but not for himself*; and so properly punished, and that *for the iniquities of us all*, -verse 6th; and *he bare their iniquities*, verse 11th: so he is said to be *delivered for our offences*, Rom. iv. 25. and v. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 18. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. Yea, we find that God appointed, and determined, or required, in the covenant of redemption; and that it was promised accordingly by the Son, that he should properly redeem his people, Heb. x. The Father requireth not of him *sacrifices, &c.* but that, *1st*, he should become man, verse 5th; and, *2dly*, suffer, Isa. liii. 10. The Son assenteth, Psalm xl. 7. 8. and accordingly performeth, Dan. ix. 24. Job xxxiii. 24. and thus is he called the Second Adam; because that as Adam by his guilt and disobedience, procured death to his posterity, by way of demerit; so Christ by his obedience and sufferings, did purchase and procure life and freedom to his, by way of merit and satisfaction, Rom. v. Thus the apostle saith, we are *justified by the redemption which is in Christ*. And this will no way impeach the Godhead of Christ, as if then it would follow, if he was God, he should satisfy himself; because he made not satisfaction or redemption as he was

God essentially, but as God-man, God incarnate, and so did participate of both natures, and was a mid man and Mediator; and so though in him there be but one person, yet there are two natures, which is enough to make a difference, Gal. iii. 20. *Now a mediator is, not a mediator of one; but God is one.*

VERSES 25. 26. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

THE apostle proceedeth in explaining the nature of justification; and in clearing the true manner how we are justified before God; wherein there are many arguments couched, tending to confirm his main thesis. He had said, in the end of the last verse, that we were redeemed through Christ, that it was he who laid down the price of our redemption: Now, this meritorious cause he farther explicates here: *First*, From the main author thereof; *God hath set him forth*: God considered essentially, or the Father hath from eternity designed, ordained, and appointed him for this work, (for so the word signifieth, Eph. i. 9.) and set him forth in types and sacrifices before hand, and in the fulness of time sent him forth in the flesh, Gal. iv. 4. 1 Pet. i. 20. 21. 22. and then sent and authorized his messengers to publish and proclaim him to the world, that now he might be seen of all, the vail being now taken away, 2 Tim. i. 9. 10. 11. *To be a propitiation*, or propitiatory. He was a Priest, and offered a sacrifice which pacified God, appeased his wrath, and averted his displeasure, which he had against us because of sin, when nothing else would do: And herein he alludeth to the *mercy seat*, which carrieth this name, which

which declared God to be atoned and appeased by the blood of the sacrifice that was offered without, Lev. xvi. till this was done there was no beholding of the *mercy-seat*; so Christ is now set forth as having made atonement, and is the true *mercy-seat*, in whom we may see God fully reconciled to us. Again he shews how this propitiation was made, *viz. by blood*; shewing, that he was the antitype of all the bloody sacrifices; his sacrifice was bloody also: and by it is understood, all his sufferings, from his entry in the world till his death, which put a period to them. *2dly*, Then he sheweth, how or what way this becometh a propitiation unto us, *viz. by faith*, and *faith in his blood*, (for *in his blood*, may refer both to *faith*, and to *propitiation*) faith respecting his bloody sacrifice and atonement; and leaning on that as sufficient to answer all accusations from the law, Satan, conscience, or others. *3dly*, He explains this propitiation more by its fruit, and sweet effect; and that is, *remission of sins*; and that even of these under the law, Heb. ix. 15. *viz. those that are past*, whose sins the blood of bulls could not expiate, Heb. x. 4. Such force had this expiatory sacrifice before it did exist, being a moral cause; whereby the apostle would shew, that all did not perish who died before Christ came; nor did God pass by their sins altogether, nor only punish them with temporal punishments; only he did put off their punishment: and this is it which is meant by the patience of God, or *forbearance*: But all the pardon they merited with, was in and thro' Christ to come, in whom the faithful among them believed and rested. God indeed then shewed his goodness, in suspending his judgments which he might have inflicted upon the world, and not destroying them, though the way of complete satisfaction was not opened as yet. *Lastly*, The matter is explained from the end which God proposed, *viz. To declare his righteousness*; to manifest, shew, and make appear, not his

universal righteousness, purity and integrity, absolutely considered, for this will only demonstrate a part of his perfection; not his mercy, which is sometimes signified indeed by this word; for whatever can be thought to be intended by it, is expressed in that word, *freely, through grace*; and there is mention made of a propitiation, which will say, that there is some other thing meant by *righteousness*, even his justice, whereby he renders to every man according to his ways, as the word is used, 2 Thess. i. 6. Heb. ii. 2. Acts xvii. 31. Rom. xvi. 5. 7. Hence is he called, *the righteous Judge*, Rom. i. 32. The time when this is demonstrated is now in the days of the gospel, wherein Christ is come, and actually has suffered the cruel death of the cross for man's sins; now is it clearly and evidently demonstrated, that God will not suffer sin to go away unpunished, but ere justice be not satisfied, he will send his own Son to suffer. And then he adds, *that he might be just*, in fulfilling all his promises and prophecies, as Isa. ix. Micah v. anent the Messiah, and redemption through him; and also just in executing the threatenings of the covenant of works upon our Cautiomer, this being no way contrary to law; and the gracious Lawgiver yielding to a merciful condescension. And, lastly, it is added, *And the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*, that now a way might be made open, how some poor sinners might be received into favour again; and thus, as his justice, so his mercy might appear in this work, in pardoning and accepting of poor sinners, even such as believe in Christ, and rest upon him.

Thus he layeth together many arguments, confirming his main purpose, which may be taken asunder thus: 1. If God has intended of old, and in time declared another way of justification than by works, then are we not justified by works: But the former is clear; Therefore, *etc.* The minor is clear; for he has *sent his Son to*

be a propitiation, etc. 2. If we are justified thro' faith in his blood, then not by works: But we are justified by faith in his blood; Therefore, *etc.* 3. Whatever way we are pardoned, by that same way are we justified: But we are pardoned not for works, but for the propitiation in Christ's blood; Therefore, *etc.* 4. Whatever way the sins of those under the law were pardoned, that way are we justified: But, *etc.* Therefore, *etc.* 5. Whatever way tends most to declare God's righteousness, that is the way: But, *etc.* Therefore, *etc.* So that, in short, justification by works destroyeth the whole nature of justification. 1. It thwarteth with the principal cause, *God purposing*; 2. with the inward moving cause, *free grace*; 3. with the external moving cause, *Christ's redemption and propitiation*; 4. with the main and only condition requisite, *faith in his blood*; 5. with that which some call the formal cause, but whatever it be called, it is the *remission of sins*; 6. with the final cause, *God's glory, in his goodness and justice.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' it was God against whom we had sined, whose covenant we had broken, and who in justice might have sent us all to hell; yet he, even he, out of his free grace and wonderful goodness, for the glory of his great name, contrived the great work of the salvation of his own chosen: by an act of sovereign power and dominion, he designed and appointed from eternity his only Son to mediate, Acts iv. 8. and ii. 23, and in due time (after he had signified it to the people of old by types and sacraments, formed him a body, prepared and fitted him for the work, Heb. x. 5. and so *sent him forth in the likeness of sinful flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. and Gal. iv. 4. laid our sins, or *caused them meet upon him*, Isa. liii. 6. and *made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin*, 2 Cor. v. 21. Laid commands upon him, therefore is he called *his servant*, Isa. xlii. 1. and xlix. 5. Phil. ii. 6.

and said to obey, Heb. x. 7. 9. and that he came to do his Father's will; *and not my will but thy will be done*, says he: and being in our room, *it pleased the Lord to bruise him, to put him to grief, to make his soul an offering for sin*, Isa. liii. 10. For Paul says, *God set him forth to be a propitiation*. See John iii. 16. Rom. v. 8. 9.

II. Tho' it be a sweet truth, and worthy of all admiration and acceptation, that God sent his Son, and set him forth; yet this is no hinderance unto the price that Christ paid; his death and sufferings were a propitiation and price of redemption no whit the less; seeing (notwithstanding that Christ in working out our redemption was a servant to the Father, yet) that the price he paid was his own; the life he laid down his own, John x. 15. --- *And I lay down my life for the sheep*; the blood he shed was his own; it was He, the second person in the Trinity, that *gave himself a ransom*, Eph. v. 2. and not the Father; and what he did, he did in his own name, he laid down his own life: and so in a proper and strict sense, the Father did not satisfy, or lay down the price to himself; but the Son, who is a distinct person from the Father, laid down his own life, at the command, indeed, of the Father: for though *God set him forth*, yet it was *to be a propitiation*; the one justles not out the other, but they agree harmoniously in the apostle's judgment.

III. Tho' at first, in the state of innocence, there was peace and friendship betwixt God and man, God had no enmity against man, whom he had created in his own likeness, Gen. i. 27. and approved to be *very good*, verse 31. nor had man any enmity against his Maker; yet now because of sin this peace is broken up, division, and separation of friendship come, Isa. lix. 2. and xlviii. 22. so as not only is there enmity in our hearts against God, Rom. viii. 7. Tit. iii. 3. Col. i. 21. Eph. ii. 12. 13. Rom. v. 10. but also enmity on God's part against us; he has renounced

peace and friendship with us: hence are we called, *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. as being liable to the stroke of God's wrath and divine anger; so that now *his wrath abides on us*, John iii. 36. and he is said to be *angry with the wicked every day*. Hence read we so often of his wrath, wrath kindled, anger, and the like: not as if God were strictly and properly angry, or wroth, but this is to be understood after the manner of men, for there is no passion in God, nor is he mutable. And herein is held forth, a law-enmity on God's part; that is, because his law was broken, unto which he had annexed a threatening, saying, *That day thou eatest, thou shalt die*, Gen. ii. 17. and *Cursed is every one that abideth not in all that is written*, Deut. xxvii. 29. and he is just and righteous, who will not suffer sinners to go unpunished, 2 Thes. i. 6. Therefore as he is displeased with their transgressions, being *holy*, Hab. i. 13. Jos. xxiv. 19. so will he make good his threatenings, and therefore reject their persons as abominable, Psal. i. 4. 5. 6. and their services, Prov. xv. 8. 9. and prepare sad strokes for them in his own time, Rom. ii. 5. And this is clearly intimated, in that Christ's sufferings are called, *a propitiation*, as rendering God propitious and favourable, who was not so formerly: and, as we shewed in the explication, it has respect unto the cover of the ark, which did still signify God to be atoned and made propitious, and that thro' the blood of the sacrifice, which behoved to be slain before this cover was to be seen.

IV. Tho' it be an uncontroverted truth, that God's giving of his Son to die was out of love, and so a fruit of love, and most intense love, because it is so held forth, John iii. 16. Rom. v. 7. 8. 1 John iv. 10. yet this will not contradict what was delivered in the last doctrine; nor will it hence follow, that Christ's death was not properly a ransom, or propitiation, or that God was not angry at us before he was atoned with that propitiation; seeing the

love by which he sent his Son was a love of *purpose* and *good pleasure*, called a love of *benevolence* and *beneficence*; and such a love as that, being an eternal and free act of his will and purpose, Rom. ix. 11. *his good pleasure*, and the purpose *which he purposed in himself*, Eph. i. 9. which was to have an efficacy by the means appointed, hath no consistency with legal enmity, such as his love of *delight* and *complacency*, *friendship*, *approbation*, and *acceptation* hath; for this cannot be till sin be removed, justice satisfied, and satisfaction made, because of God's justice and truth: but notwithstanding of this legal enmity, God, according to the good pleasure of his will, may purpose to deliver us, without any breach of justice; he may pity mankind, and find out and purpose a way to pardon them: for here, though God *set forth* this propitiation, yet it is a propitiation still, and so supposes enmity.

V. Albeit it was Christ the second person that did lay down his life for us, and thereby gave proof of his matchless and incomparable love; yet are we not more bound to him than to the Father, as some do foolishly and falsely gather: our obligation to both, and either respectfully, is so great, that it can be no greater; we are bound to both in the absolutely highest degree; for had either Father or Son been against it, it had never been: For here, as often elsewhere, the Father is shown to have had a great hand in this matter, so as the rife and fountain is assigned to be the love of the Father; for as the propitiation was in Christ's blood, so it was *God* the Father, or rather the whole Trinity (seeing all their works in and about the creatures, belongeth to them all alike, excepting only the order of operation) that *set him forth to be a propitiation*.

VI. It should fully satisfy us, touching our inability to satisfy justice, and purchase a righteousness to ourselves, thro' which we might stand justified before God, that the infinite wisdom of God, which

was, so to speak, set on work by infinite love, to find out some way how justice and mercy might embrace each other, did fall upon no other way, but that the only Son of God should satisfy: therefore is there an emphasis in this *whom* (excluding all other means and ways imaginable) *God hath set forth*, to be conceived.

VII. Sure it must be some more urgent, weighry and important cause, for which God should set forth Christ to die, and shed his blood, than to confirm his doctrine; seeing that was sufficiently done by his life and miracles; and the death of the blessed martyrs that suffered for the truth; and seeing he was so dear to his Father, *his Son, his only begotten Son, his well beloved Son*; and seeing it was no ordinary exercise he was put to, *even to die, and to die in an unheard-of manner*; and more than that too, to *give his soul an offering for sin*. And what else can it be for, than to satisfy justice, and loose the obligation of a standing law, &c. hence it is called a *propitiation* here, and 1 John ii. 2. and iv. 10. Upon this, sure, it is that he is called a *bloody sacrifice*, and was typified by the sacrifices under the law.

VIII. Seeing (as we cleared, Doct. 3d.) because of sin, God has a real displeasure at us, and a legal enmity, and Christ satisfied, (as was shown in the last Doct. Observe.) it followeth as a clear truth, that God is now pacified by that which Christ did and suffered; atonement being made, he is now reconciled; that is, his wrath and anger, and all the effects of it, are now turned away: not as if we thought there were any proper change in God, who is still one and the same unchangeable Jehovah; but now the bars that obstruct his love of complacency and friendship, such as the law, justice and truth, are removed, without the least change in him, all the change being in us. It is true, we find it not said expressly, that *God is reconciled to us*, but that *we are reconciled to God*, because we are the party offending,

which is, in ordinary speech, said to be *reconciled*, and the other to be *pacified*; yet even where it is said that we are reconciled to God, it is clearly implied and hinted, that God likewise is reconciled to us, (and how can it be otherwise, seeing the one necessarily followeth the other,) Rom. v. 10. where *reconciled*, verse 10. is the same with *justified*, verse 9. and to be justified says, we are accepted of God; so are we said to *receive this reconciliation*, verse 11. and so it must necessarily imply that God is atoned; so 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. 20. 21. it is implied that God is reconciled to us, for it is added *by Jesus Christ*, and then the effect is, *not imputing their trespasses*, and the cause, *for he made him sin for us*; yea, and it is made a motive upon which ministers should persuade people to be reconciled; so Ephes. ii. 12.---17. where the reconciliation is of both sides, as the enmity was on both sides; and this reconciliation of God to both Jews and Gentiles, is a mean of reconciling them among themselves, and the cause of all is the *body of Christ* upon the *cross*. This hath ground moreover here, 1st, in that it is called a *propitiation* (the purport of which word is to *render propitious and favourable*, as 1 John ii. 2.) and that (as we shew in the exposition) with reference to the *covering of the ark*, or the *mercy seat*, which hath this name, Heb. ix. 5. which did declare that God was atoned and appeased by the sacrifice offered without, without which he would not have any pledge of his being atoned, seen; so the Lord declares himself appeased by his blood; hence there is mention made of his *blood*, to call to mind the bloody sacrifices of old, which typified Christ, in whom alone God was well pleased and reconciled. 2^{dly}, It hath ground, in that it is such a *propitiation* as hath remission following it. Now, remission being an act of God, it sheweth, that by the propitiation he was pacified; for, want of satisfaction to justice, lay in the way of pardon and remission, before;
but

but now, when there is remission, it says, that satisfaction is had, and so God is pacified. *3dly*, In that it followeth, *that he might be the justifier of the believers in Christ*; for what sense were it to say, *we were reconciled, or atoned, that he might justify*? Is it not better sense to say, Justice now being satisfied, and the law answered by the atonement, God was then free to justify believers, there being now a fair door opened, which was closed before.

IX. Howbeit Christ was a worthy person, being the Son of God, who *thought it no robbery to be counted equal with the Father*, Phil. ii. 6. yet by no less could he satisfy justice than by his dearh and blood; no less could be a propitiation, there being a standing law, and the covenant running thus, *The day thou eatest, thou shalt die*: Justice required that that should be made good, either by himself or by his cautioner. The sacrifices, which were types of Christ, were bloody, and so the Antitype behaved to be so also. Christ was a testator, and *a testament is of no force until the testator die*, Heb. ix. 16. 17. and *without shedding of blood there is no remission*, ver. 21. Hence is there so often mention of his blood, Heb. ix. 14. and x. 19. 1 Pet. i. 2. 19. 1 John i. 7. 1 Cor. x. 16. Eph. ii. 13. and we are said to be redeemed and purchased by blood, Acts xx. 28. Rom. v. 9. And though blood be particularly mentioned, it includes all his precedent sufferings, both of body (which made way for this bloody death) and of soul, Matth. xxvi. 27. and xxvii. 46. Gal. iii. 13. Therefore it is said here, to be a *propitiation through his blood*.

X. Albeit that man by his fall incurred death, both spiritual and temporal, and so was *dead in sin*, Eph. ii. 1. and had miseries, sickness, and diseases on his body, and was liable to corruption, and death of soul and body in hell for ever, Mat. ix. 44. 46. 48. 2 Theff. i. 9. and altho' it be true that Christ Jesus was never dead in sin, but *was like us in all things except sin*, Heb. iv. 5. and

vii. 26. and was free from diseases of body, nor was liable to corruption, Psalm xvi. 10. Acts ii. 31. and xiii. 35. nor did descend locally into hell, seeing that same night he went to Paradise, Luke xxiii. 43. nor incurred the curse for ever; yet was Christ our surety, Heb. vii. 22. and his death and sufferings were satisfactory unto justice; the law was thereby satisfied, God's wrath averted: for whatever was essentially and properly penal, in the punishment which was due unto the sinners, was suffered by Christ, who endured the total temporal privation of all the sense of the good of the promise, and the positive evil flowing from the curse, considered absolutely, without respect to the disposition of the patient. Now, it is accidental to the punishment, and that which floweth from the disposition of the sufferer, that he dies in sin, (for sin is not essential to punishment, whereof God is author) or despaireth, or lieth finally, and for ever under the punishment, for this floweth merely from the inability to make satisfaction; nor is the place of torment essential to the punishment: so that the punishment that Christ underwent, being both the pain of loss, Psalm xxii. 2. Matth. xxvii. 40. and the pain of sense, Matth. xxvi. 37. Isa. liii. Luke xxii. 44. was equivalent (if not the same) to what the law threatened. For here there was a *propitiation*, though but in *his blood*, or death. See Heb. ii. ix. 14. Gal. iii. 13.

XI. Altho' God in justice might have refused any satisfaction made by Christ, seeing it was wholly out of God's free love that Christ was sent and appointed unto that office; and he might (had it so seemed good in his eyes, *who doth all things according to the good pleasure of his will*, Eph. i. 11.) have executed the threatening upon us who were the offenders; yet Christ being appointed to the work by God, and accordingly discharging the undertaking, what he did and suffered was a full and perfect satisfaction; it had an intrinsic worth, in that he was God, who laid down the price,

price, Acts xx. 28. and the price was no less than himself, Heb. ix. 28. So that it was perfect, not because God did by way of grace supply what he wanted, and indulged any defect; or because of God's gracious acceptation, but because of the inward equality and condignity betwixt the price and the thing purchased; so that Christ's obedience and sufferings were more satisfactory to justice, than the everlasting death of all had been; and more satisfactory than the sins of all those for whom he died were displeasing; otherways God would never have suffered sin to have been: Therefore it is *a propitiation in his blood*.

XII. Howbeit it be a truth that Christ hath delivered all his own from all the penalty of sin, by suffering it in their stead, and yet believers meet with death, seeing it is so appointed, Heb. ix. 28. yet it will not hence follow, that Christ's temporal death was not any part of satisfaction, because death to them is not properly penal, but rather a favour, liberating them out of their prison: for here there is *a propitiation even in his blood*. Hence he was *a curse*, even when he died, Gal. iii. 13. and he is said to *offer himself* for us.

XIII. Albeit Christ Jesus was innocent himself, and knew no sin, yet this will not hinder but his sufferings were satisfactory; nor was it any injustice that he, an innocent person, should suffer for the innocent and guilty, seeing he was most willing to do so, and took delight in it, and was the head of his church, and so a near kinsman, yea, and able to pay all, and suffer all, and procure more glory to God than man's own sufferings could have done: hence God's goodness is the more set forth to us, in that such an one *who knew no sin*, should have been *made sin for us*, 1 Cor. v. 21. see also, 1 Pet. ii. 21. and iii. 18. For here there is *a propitiation in his blood*, and God (who is justice itself, and can do no wrong) *set him forth*.

XIV. Tho' Christ be acting the part of a high-priest in heaven, making interces-

sion for the carrying on the work of our salvation, and so *is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him*, Heb. vii. 25. yet seeing the foundation of that work which he carrieth on there, was laid in the earth, he was a high-priest before he ascended, even while on the earth; hence it is said, that he *gave himself a sacrifice*, Eph. v. 2. and such an one is a priest, Heb. v. 1. see Eph. v. 25. Gal. ii. 22. Rom. viii. 32. and iv. 25. Heb. v. 6. 7. and i. 3. and vii. 27. and ix. 12. 26. 1 Pet. ii. 21. Thus the blood of the sacrifices which typified Christ, *viz.* the daily sacrifices, was not carried into the holy place. Therefore here there is *a propitiation in his blood*, and so before he ascended he was a priest making atonement.

XV. To expect justification for any works we can do, is to cross the grand design, and noble device of God, in sending his Son to die; for that God hath *set Christ out to be a propitiation*, is a standing argument, that justification is not by works, but by faith.

XVI. Albeit God set forth Christ from eternity to be a propitiation for his chosen, in particular, and in time sent him to lay down the price and ransom for those and no other, in particular; and Christ both undertook, and discharged the undertaking, for none other, but for those in special; yet this price paid and laid down, is not forthcoming to the elect, nor actually applied for their good, until they believe; for it is *a propitiation through faith*: and faith is the way God in his wisdom hath carved, whereby this death and blood of Christ's becometh an actual propitiation.

XVII. Albeit faith be requisite to the applying of the redemption purchased by Christ, yet this doth no way lessen the freedom of it, seeing our faith, upon whatever score, doth not come in to pay the least penny of the price; it comes not in as a mite in the ransom, but receives the whole ransom, and rests upon it, in another

other. Tho' we cannot be the better of an alms till we receive it, yet it is no less an alms that we receive it. And further, faith itself is given and bestowed freely; for we are justified freely by his grace, verse 23d, altho' the propitiation be through faith.

XVIII. Faith looks for acceptance for nothing in itself, but goes quite out of a man's self, and rests upon the merits and death of Christ, as only satisfactory to justice, and through which it expects to be accepted of God, and brought into favour again; it pleads this only as the ground of its being justified before God: therefore it is faith in his blood.

XIX. Tho' when angels, more glorious creatures than men, fell, there was no possibility of recovery, or of pardon for them, yet it seemed good in the Lord's eyes, the riches of whose love is unsearchable, to make forgiveness of sins possible and attainable unto poor man: hence is there mention made here of *remission of sins*.

XX. Albeit man that has sinned can never be made innocent again of that whereof now he is guilty; for what is once done can never be so undone; nor can it ever be said, that his sins deserve not God's wrath; the law being once made, the breach thereof doth, thro' God's appointment, incur his wrath and displeasure; nor the blot that sin maketh upon the soul can never be removed fully till death; yet sin is so far pardoned, as that the actual obligation unto condemnation is removed, guilt actual is taken away, so that the sinner once pardoned, shall never be condemned; for this, is *remission of sins* here mentioned.

XXI. Christ's merits are the only procuring cause of our pardon and remission, and our remission is no less remission that it has such a valuable, considerable price going before to purchase it; for it is in and through the *propitiation in Christ*, that remission is had, and a proper remission too: so that it is false to say, God pardoneth

sin as a reward of Christ's death and sufferings, because of his mere promise, and not because of any worth or merit in them; seeing this redemption and propitiation in Christ's blood, is set out as a price, 1 Pet. i. 18. 1 Cor. vi. 20. *For ye are bought with a price*. Nor will it hence follow, that we ought not to pardon those that offend us, without satisfaction; for though we are commanded to imitate God in pardoning offences, Matth. xviii. 27. Eph. iv. 32. and v. 1. yet not in every particular: for, to speak properly, we cannot pardon at all, but God only, Isa. xliii. 12: only we should pardon the wrong that is done us, as really, surely, and effectually, as God doth the sin against him. See Eph. i. 7. Matth. xxvi. 28. Acts xxvi. 18.

XXII. Tho' God decreed from all eternity to pardon the sins of his own chosen, and so their sins may be said, in so far, to be pardoned *intentionally*, before they be committed, and laid our sins on Christ, who in due time satisfied for them, and so *meritoriously* they may be said to be pardoned, yet are they not *actually* pardoned, until the sinner, convinced of a necessity, flee in to that price, and lean to it; for *remission* is not had but *by faith in his blood*, going before; so that pardon results from Christ's merits, and our accepting of these merits, and resting on them.

XXIII. In justification believers have their iniquities pardoned, all their by-past, transgressions are covered and remitted; for being justified by his grace, ver. 24th, is to have their sins remitted, ver. 25th.

XXIV. Albeit the elect be not actually justified or reconciled until they believe, as we cleared, Doct. 16th and 22d; yet hereby there is no wrong done to Christ our Mediator, that the fruits of his mediation are thus suspended, seeing it was his own will it should be so; for thus it was covenanted (to speak so) betwixt the Father and the Son, both of them having the same will and intention, and so agreeing mutually, both asent the manner and time of our reconciliation;

reconciliation; so that what was God's purpose in the matter, was Christ's also, he being in the work, but (to speak so) the Father's servant, Isa. xlii. 1. doing all in obedience to God's command, John x. 18. Now, it was God's purpose that the benefits of Christ's death should be suspended until faith, John vi. 40. and iii. 14. 15. 16. Isa. liii. 11. Nor doth this wrong or impair the intrinsical worth of Christ's death and merits; for his death, notwithstanding of this, was a full and complete satisfaction to divine justice, (as we shewed, Doct. 11.) so that the last farthing is paid, and justice can crave no more by way of satisfaction: and it can be no wrong to justice, that the Son make satisfaction, and the Father accept thereof, upon terms which they may agree upon; and, particularly, that the sinner, or debtor, be not actually loosed from the obligation upon the Cautioner's payment, till such or such a time. Neither hereby is the death of Christ rendered less efficacious, and the fruits and effects of it less certain; for it is a redemption which shall have effect in due time, faith not being such a potestative condition as is fully in our own power to act or not; but such a condition as is purchased by Christ, and which God hath decreed to work irresistibly, Acts xiii. 48. John vi. 36. Jer. xxx. 31. Eph. i. 18. Nor is it ridiculous that God should promise upon a condition which himself worketh, seeing faith is not immediately from himself, but so wrought by him as it is our act, and so performed by us voluntarily. And Christ's death contributes an immediate efficacy unto reconciliation, and is the only immediate meritorious cause thereof; faith neither making Christ's death meritorious, (as if it were not so before) nor moving God to accept of it as meritorious; for it is said here, that Christ's death was *a propitiation*, and so completely satisfactory, tho' thro' faith; and upon those terms he was *set forth to be a propitiation*, viz. *through faith*.

XXV. Albeit that Christ as a cautioner, satisfied justice in the room of the elect, (not that we substituted him in our place, to do and suffer all which we were bound to do and suffer; for then his righteousness should be ours whether we believed or not, he believing in our name, as well as suffering; yea, then what he did and suffered should be more ours than his, as the deed of an attorney and messenger is more the deed of such as they represent, than their own) being substituted in our room by the Father, to satisfy the law for us, and so becoming one person, in law, with the principal debtors, paying the same debt, so as no other satisfaction is required of the debtors: yet this satisfaction made by Christ our cautioner, is not properly our justification and pardon of sin, but only its ground and meritorious cause; for he is set forth *to be a propitiation*, and then followeth, as a distinct thing, *remission of sins*; and justification, that *he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth*, as merited and purchased thereby.

XXVI. Whatever difference there be betwixt those under the Old Testament, and those under the New, the one having Christ only in a promise, the other as actually come in the flesh, and exhibited in the gospel; the one having him in types and dark shadows, which were but *shadows of good things to come*, the other, *the image of the things themselves*, Heb. x. 1. the one having more full and clear promises than the other, Heb. viii. 6. yet (both the old and the new covenant being the same in substance, viz. a covenant of grace, made not with perfect man; as the covenant of works was, but with sinners, Deut. xxix. 30. 31. 32. and often renewed, Deut. xxxi. 28. 29. 30. and iv. 30. 31. 2 Chron. xv. 12. 2 Kings. xi. 17. and xxiii. 3. 2 Chron. xxiii. 16. and xxiv. 3.) even then there was remission of sins promised and granted, which is a great privilege of the new covenant. Heb. viii. 12. For here we have mention made of *remission of sins that were*

were paſt; that is, remiſſion of their ſins who lived and died before Chriſt came in the fleſh: See Exod. xxxii. 31. 32. and xxxiv. 6. 7. 2 Chron. vii. 14. Iſa. xliii. 25. Pſal. xxv. 11. ſi. 12. 14. and xxxii. 1. &c.

XXVII. Whatever remiſſion of ſins theſe under the law had, it was not merited by any works of theirs; their *do and live* being only a ſhut-ting them up in cloſe priſon, that they might fly to a Mediator; but by Jeſus Chriſt, *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. the *only Mediator between God and man*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. ſee Heb. xiii. 8. John viii. 56. 58. (hence he is ſaid to have been tempted by the Iſraelites, 1 Cor. x. 9. with Exod. xxiii. 20. 21.) who *once offered himſelf*, Heb. ix. 25. &c. whoſe death could have merited before it did exiſt, as any moral meritorious cauſe may do. And tho' Moſes be called *a mediator*, Gal. iii. 19. 20. yet that was but as a type of Chriſt, Deut. xviii. and as a ſervant, Heb. iii. 5. who wrote of Chriſt, John. v. 46. Hence all their ſacrifices and ceremonies pointed out Chriſt, who was the ſubſtance of all thoſe ſhadows, Heb. x. 1. and could not expiate ſin, Heb. ix. 9. and x. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. For here *the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt*, was *through the propitiation in his blood*. See Acts x. 43. and xv. 11. and xxvi. 23.

XXVIII. Albeit Chriſt the only Mediator was not come, but darkly ſhadowed forth by types and figures, as a promiſed Meſſias, or a Meſſias to come, under the law; yet pardon of ſins was no otherways had then, but by faith in Chriſt: for tho' the doctrine of faith was ſparingly then held forth, yet faith was then neceſſary, and ſubſtanti-ally the ſame with faith under the goſpel, both leaning to a Meſſiah, the one as to come, the other as come already: for here, Chriſt was a *propitiation through faith, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt*. See Heb. xi. 4. 5. 6. 7. Hab. ii. 4. Acts x. 43. Heb. iv. 1. 2.

XXIX. Albeit it be ſaid. Numb. xv. 30. that for ſuch ſins as were done preſump-

tuouſly, the ſoul was to be cut off, where-as an atonement was to be made for ſins of ignorance; yet (that being by the law as with its judicial additions) it was the rule of their judicial polity, by which there was no ſacrifice appointed that might free them from temporal death; and ſo this was but a peculiar appointment of their commonwealth, it being mainly for *omissions* or *commissions* in their ceremonial performances; for verſe 22d looks clearly back to the preceding verſes, and had no reſpect to the ſpiritual expiation of ſin thereby typified, otherways none guilty of ſuch ſins ſhould ever have been ſaved) expiation by legal ſacrifices was not for ſome ſins only, others excepted, but for all, Lev. xvi. 21. And ſo, though under the law their purgations and ſacrifices being reſted on, could really expiate no ſin, as is clear, Acts xiii. 38. 39. Heb. ix. 9. they being but ſhadows of Chriſt, the *good thing to come*, Heb. x. 1. yet typically they expiate all ſin, none excepted: for here, indefinitely, and indifcriminately it is ſaid, *for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt*. See Heb. ix. 15.

XXX. Under the old covenant believers were freed not only from temporal death by their typical ſacrifices, but alſo from death eternal; their ſins being a tranſgreſſion of a moral law, requiring obedience upon pain of eternal death; for it was ſuch a remiſſion as was purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt, and by no leſs; and Chriſt died to deliver them from death, even ſuch as, *through fear of death, were in bondage*, Heb. ii. 15. and thus Chriſt was a *propitiation through faith in his blood, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt*.

XXXI. It was a great argument of God's patience and forbearance, that he paſſed by the iniquities of thoſe under the law, even when there was no actual ſatisfaction made to juſtice for their tranſgreſſions; therefore it is added, *through the forbearance of God*.

XXXII. As God is righteous with an univerſal righteouſneſs, whereby he can do

do no wrong, but is perfect and upright in all his ways, which is an absolute essential attribute in God; so is he righteous with a particular relative righteousness, whereby he will render to every man what is his due; which appeareth in his ruling the world, and appointing a place of torment for the obstinate, Jude 15. and in afflicting the wicked even in this world, Psal. lxxxix. 14. Isa. xxviii. 17. so here he is said to be *just*.

XXXIII. Albeit this relative righteousness of God be often manifested in his executing his wrath upon the workers of iniquity, and was actually manifested oftentimes before Christ came, as in the destruction of the old world, and of Sodom, Gomorrah, &c. yet none of these, nay, all of them, gave not such a proof and demonstration of this vindicative justice, as his giving Christ to die and satisfy for sinners is: for *Christ was set forth to be a propitiation, in his blood, to declare his righteousness*.

XXXIV. If we look upon God in respect of his absolute power, that is, his power not limited by the demonstration of his own will, he might have passed by sinners, and not have punished them; so that he punisheth not by any necessity antecedent to his own free determination, seeing by no natural necessity he imposed a penal law, there being no natural necessary connection betwixt his dominion over the creature, and his imposing of penal laws; for he *set forth Christ as a propitiation*, that sinners may go free; and so substituted him in their room to suffer for them, which he could not do, if he punished sin by any natural necessity, as the fire burneth; and hereby, as by punishing the wicked in his own person, he intends *the demonstration of the glory of his justice*, which he might, had it so seemed good in his eyes, never have intended to shew forth.

XXXV. Whatever God might have done, absolutely considered, yet having

made and imposed a penal law, and decreed to punish the contraveeners of that law, this relative justice, whereby he will eth to give to every man what is his due according to God's will, requireth that the sinner be not freed from punishment without satisfaction made to justice, seeing he is constant, faithful, and true; for Christ is *set forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, &c.*

XXXVI. Albeit in these days of the gospel there be much of God's love, mercy and good-will manifested, more than ever, and God doth not usually pursue sinners with such visible and temporal plagues as he did of old; yet sinners have no cause to encourage themselves in wickedness, as if God were all mercy and no justice now; for even in the gospel days his justice is as great as ever, and more clearly and convincingly held forth than ever, in that he would not spare his only begotten Son, in whom was never any guilt found, but put him to death while standing in the room of sinners: therefore says he, *to declare at this time his righteousness*.

XXXVII. Tho' we be ready to overlook God's justice in the matter of our redemption, yet it is useful to consider seriously, how justice as well as mercy kyths in it, and how they kiss and embrace each other, that the wisdom of God may be the more admired in the salvation of sinners, who can make justice and mercy, as it were, lay their shoulders together to help in our redemption, and mercy gain the day, yet so as justice should suffer no detriment: therefore doth he once and again, that it may not be forgotten, say, that one end of Christ's being a propitiation for sin was, *to declare his righteousness*, and again, *to declare, I say, his righteousness*.

XXXVIII. Albeit Christ Jesus was most righteous and innocent, free of all iniquity, yet it was no act of injustice or cruelty in God, to bruise him and afflict him for our cause, and to lay the punishment of our sins upon him, seeing he willingly gave him

himself to justice, and laid down his life a ransom to God, John xv. 15. 17. 18. and voluntarily became our cautioner, and for that cause took on him a near relation to us, even the relation of a head and husband, and a near kinsman; but rather an act of justice: therefore it is said, *he was set forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just.*

XXXIX. Tho' Christ was set forth to be a propitiation to satisfy justice, and for declaration and manifestation of the righteousness of God; yet it was not only in respect of God, otherways it had been no proof of God's rich mercy and goodness towards us, but also for our good: and there is no inconsistency here, but a sweet harmony and agreement; the satisfaction of justice making way for good to redound toward us, which otherways we could not have been partakers of: for both these ends are held forth here, as Christ was set forth to be *a propitiation, that God might be just*, so also, *that he might justify believers in Christ.*

XL. Tho' God be just and righteous, and in strict justice might have punished all, according to the rigour of the law, with everlasting destruction, without any mercy; yet now, out of the depth of his wisdom, there is a way found out how poor sinners might be delivered from the deserved curse, and absolved from the penalty of the law, without any wrong done to justice; for through Christ's being a propitiation *God is just*, and withal, *the justifier of those who are by faith in Christ.*

XLI. Whatever worth and excellence be in the death and merits of Christ, yet none have ground to claim any benefit thereby, but such as are by faith in Christ; for he will be *the justifier of such only as are by faith in Christ.*

VERSE 27. *Where is boasting then? It is excluded? By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*

HERE is another argument whereby the apostle proveth we are not justified by works, but by faith, to this purpose: We are only justified that way by which all ground of boasting and gloriation is taken away from man: But so it is that all ground of gloriation is taken away by the way of faith, and not by the way of works; Therefore, &c. The first proposition is clear from what he had said in the preceding verses, from which he seemeth to infer this by the particle *then*; as if he had said, If the Lord had any mind, that man should have had any ground of boasting, he would not have set Christ forth to have been a propitiation through faith in his blood, that thereby way might be made for his justifying of sinners; so as his justice might suffer no prejudice; but now he has taken this course, and therefore the only way of justification is a way that yields no ground of boasting. The next proposition he cleareth here, and proposeth it by interrogations, the more to bear in the conviction of the truth, saying, *Where is boasting then?* Can any, may any man now boast of himself, or be proud? No, says he, *it is excluded*; it is shot out of doors: *By what law?* By what doctrine? *By that of works?* *Nay*: the way of justification by works makes a man swell with pride and conceit of his own power and ability, and puts him out of God's reverence, to speak so: *But by the law of faith*; that is, by the doctrine of the gospel, which pointeth out salvation in Christ, and commandeth faith in him, as the only way of justification: and he makes mention of a law, in imitation of those with whom he was now disputing, who would hear of nothing but of a law, as Christ did call faith *a work*, John vi. 29. The way of justification by faith makes a man destitute of all his own righteousness, and puts him to flee out of himself, and lay hold of the righteousness of another, and so takes all occasion of boasting and gloriation from him:

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Proud men would fain be at such a way of reaching the crown, as may afford them most ground of boasting, and self-applauding; and therefore are most backward to submit unto the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. and therefore the apostle labours to cast down this, by crying out, Since Christ is set forth, &c. *Where is boasting?*

II. God hath so contrived and ordered the whole business of our salvation, as all mouths may be stoped, and *all that glory may glory in the Lord*; and therefore whatever way men fall upon, whereby mans mouth is opened in the least, it is farthest off from God's way, which is altogether to lay man's boasting, so *boasting is excluded*, no more to get entry.

III. As it is an evidence of great pride and self conceit in a man to look for justification or salvation for any thing in himself, or which he can do; so to expect justification because of any worth in us is a most vain course, and a way that God doth not allow of; and that it is so, may be sufficiently made out from this, that it is a way which puffeth up a man, and makes him swell so with pride, as that he cannot contain himself, but boast and glory of his own worth; for justification by works doth *not exclude boasting*, and because it is so, therefore the apostle concludeth, that it is not the right way; for this is the force of his argument.

IV. Seeing the way of justification by faith in Christ carrieth a man quite out of himself, to look for all in and through another; therefore such as have any high thoughts of themselves, are walking in a way of works, and are strangers unto the right way of justification by faith; and whoever are practically acquainted with the way of faith, will have low and humble thoughts of any thing within themselves; for *the law of faith excludes boasting*.

VERSE 28. *Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.*

After this long dispute, the apostle, before he goes to make use of other mediums for the farther confirmation of the truth, sets down the conclusion, in short; *Therefore we conclude*, from firm and solid reason, *that a man is justified*, absolved from all accusation, and that judicially, *by faith*, laying hold on the merits of Christ, who was set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, *without the deeds of the law*, of whatsoever sort, as being any part of the meritorious cause of our justification; or being any condition on which dependeth our being put in a justified state.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. There is such a privilege vouchsafed upon sinners, who have fled in to Christ by faith, as justification, whereby they get their iniquities and transgressions pardoned, only because of the propitiation which Christ made by his bloody sacrifice; so as they are accepted of as righteous, not for any thing in themselves, or done by them, but allenarly for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and accepted by faith: for this definition of justification results from the preceding dispute, where it was shown, that God justifieth; and that justification was not an infusing of righteousness in us, but such an act of God whereby he pardoneth our sins, and consequently looks upon us as righteous, and that only for Christ, who was set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.

II. This justification being a fundamental business, it becometh all of us to be clear in it; and however men of corrupt minds think it folly to say, that we are justified by the righteousness of another imputed to us, and so in scorn call it a
putative

putative righteousness, and a thing contrary to all sense and reason; yet we see it is a truth founded on firm and solid grounds, that man is justified by the righteousness of another, laid hold on by faith: for the apostle concludes this truth from solid and undeniable grounds, saying, *Now therefore we conclude, &c.* And as it is a truth founded on solid grounds, so it is a real deed, being a deed of God's, founded upon the purchase of Christ, which was a real thing, and producing real effects, as peace with God, pardon, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

III. Howbeit faith be requisite to justification, (as hath been shown in the former verses, and may yet farther appear in this) and in believing we are not mere blocks, but agents acted by grace; yet justification, being a judicial, foriniscal act of God, we doing nothing whereupon we might be accounted just, but being wholly broken dyvers, and Christ only paying all, as to us is a passive thing, and we passive as to the Lord's pronouncing the sentence from the bench: hence it is always said, in a passive sense, *we are justified.*

IV. Albeit it be true, that a believer, by faith may win to apprehend, and feelingly to know, that he is justified and pardoned in and through Christ, when he reflects and looks back upon himself; yet this is not all which is had by faith, nor is this sense and apprehension of pardon and reconciliation, that which is here called justification by faith: before this justification in the court of conscience, there is a real, personal, actual justification, otherways that justification in conscience should be error; and this is had by faith, and of this the apostle speaketh here: For, *1st*, he speaketh of such a justification whereof God is the author; saying before, *It is God that justifieth*: but man is the cause of this justification in conscience, by taking up, and considering, and understanding his estate. *2dly*, He speaketh of

such a justification wherein we are passive; but we are not passive in this of justification in conscience. *3dly*, He speaks of such a justification as is common to Paul with the weakest and meanest believer; saying, *We are justified*: but justification in conscience hath divers degrees, for some are more, some are less persuaded of their justification. *4thly*, He speaks of such a justification as is a standing, lasting thing, not rising or falling; even of such a justification whereby believers are put into a safe state, and so shall never be lost; but this justification in conscience riseth and falleth, and is sometimes quite lost; so that believers are often in a state of damnation, and so unjustified, as to their own apprehension. *5thly*, He speaks of such a justification which is had by faith, and so is enjoyed by every true believer; but justification in the court of conscience, many a believer wanteth many a day, if not all his lifetime. *6thly*, He speaks of such a justification which is had by faith, and so doth immediately follow faith, if not go alongst with it; but justification in conscience doth not so inseparably go along with faith, and immediately follow it. *7thly*, He speaketh of such a justification, the meritorious cause whereof is the propitiation through the blood of Christ; but this is the meritorious cause of another justification than that in conscience, even of our real and personal justification. *8thly*, He speaketh of such a justification as is, in a special manner, by faith, and not by works; but this justification in conscience is by works, as well as by faith: and so *we are justified by faith.*

V. Albeit God did from all eternity decree to justify his elect, in time, thro' faith in Christ, every transient act presupposing an imminent act, seeing God doth nothing in time but what he purposed to do from eternity; yet are not his children actually justified from eternity, justification not being an imminent act, which is only terminated in the agent, having nothing for its term but himself, but a transient

sent act, working a real change upon the creature, bringing him from a state of damnation, to a state of salvation; they not being actually guilty, (albeit God foreknew their guilt, for that says it was not from eternity, but was to be in time) and so not capable of pardon, nor of punishment; otherways, from eternity they should have been heirs of the kingdom, contrary to Heb. xi. 7. Tit. iii. 7. Gal. iii. 26. 29. Rom. iv. 11. 12. 13. 14. and viii. 16. 17. Eph. iii. 6. James ii. 5. and never children of wrath deserving condemnation, contrary to Eph. ii. 1. 2. 3. Rom. viii. 1. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. John vi. 53. 1 John v. 12. nor bound to confess themselves such, and be humbled for it, nor pray for pardon and a right to heaven, nor use any other means for that end; all which are gross: for the apostle saith, *We are justified by faith*, not speaking of a justification from eternity: For, 1st, he speaketh of such a justification as is either by faith or by works; but justification from eternity is neither by faith nor by works, but before either we believe or work. 2^{dly}, He speaketh of such a justification as is merited by the blood of Christ; but justification from eternity (which can be no other thing, but God's purpose to justify in time) is not merited by Christ's death; yea, it overthroweth Christ's merits, for then Christ should not have died to have procured pardon, and satisfy justice, but only to manifest God's love; and justification should have been our due, whether Christ had died or not. See, moreover, Acts x. 43. Rom. v. 1. 2. Gal. ii. 16. and iii. 22. Acts xiii. 39.

VI. Albeit Christ as a public person, suffering for the elect, made full satisfaction to justice for their sins, and thus meritoriously purged their sins, Heb. i. 3. and took them away, John i. 29. so as God requireth no more satisfaction, either at his hands or theirs, Matth. iii. 17. and thereby procured a right to heaven; yet are not the elect actually and personally justified then, no, not until this be applied

by faith, seeing before faith they are liable to God's curse and wrath, &c. John iii. 18. Eph. ii. 12. Tit. iii. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 1 Cor. vi. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 10. 2 Pet. i. 4. 1 Pet. i. 3. 23. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Heb. ii. 14. Rom. vi. 14. 15. 16. 20. 21. 23. and vii. 15. John viii. 24. 32. 33. 34. 36. 1 John iii. 14. 15. and v. 10. 11. 12. And farther, Christ did not so die for the sins of the elect, that they should be pardoned whether they believe or not; yea, but whatever right to remission and salvation he purchased, and however absolutely, in respect of the purchase made, yet no actual remission, but by faith; so that faith is the condition of remission, tho' both faith and remission, and all graces, are alike absolutely purchased: for here the apostle saith, *We are justified by faith*, and so not before; not at Christ's death, for then Paul's dispute would have been groundless, for so we should neither be justified by faith, nor by works.

VII. Howbeit when Paul says, we are justified by faith, he does not exclude Christ from being the meritorious cause, but include him; so that faith is taken as having reference to its object, and connotating it; yet faith in this business is not to be considered only objectively, as if the meaning of the apostle was this, *we are justified by faith*; that is, we are justified by Christ's blood meritoriously, and so faith should be excluded from being a condition; but faith is taken subjectively, with connotation to its object; and the meaning is this; we are justified by Christ's blood, laid hold on by faith; or, by faith griping Christ and his merits: for he infers this from what he said before, touching the meritorious cause in Christ, as a conclusion; and so it must not be the same, proven by the same. Beside that, it is hard to think the apostle would so often say, *we are justified by faith*, putting always faith for Christ; especially when he is clearing how and what way we are justified, that is, how justification is procured, and how it be-

cometh

cometh ours : now, if faith had no interest in justification, as a mean applying it, the apostle would not say, as he doth, that *we are justified by faith.*

VIII. Faith, being true and sincere, is the mean of justification; whether it be weak or strong; it justifieth as a true and lively faith, and not as strong in such and such a degree, nor as enduring so long or so long : for he concludes, that *we are justified by faith*, not telling of what degrees it should be.

IX. Whether faith, in justification, be considered as an instrument (in that it applyeth the righteousness of Christ, which must immediately be presented to God's justice, and hath a peculiar aptitude for that effect, and doth the same in justification, which the stung people their looking on the brazen serpent did in recovery of their health; and is that which is used by the Lord, the principal agent in justification, it being his gift and work, as subservient to him, in producing this effect of justification, far more noble than itself; not that the Lord had any need thereof, but so it seemed good to him, to make use of faith for this end, so that he would not justify without it) or only a mere condition and no instrument, lest man, or any act of his, should share of Christ's honour, which is but a groundless fear; yet it hath a peculiar interest in our justification, which no other grace hath; to our being put into a state of justification it doth concur, so as no other work can share with it, no other grace having such a peculiar aptitude to apply and rest on Christ; therefore we are said to be *justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*: so that as we are not justified for the deeds of the law, they not being the meritorious cause; nor are we justified by them, or put into a justified estate by them, even as conditions, however they be necessary to salvation, and required of those who are in a justified state.

VERSES 29. 30. *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also :*

Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

BEfore he proceeds he answereth two questions, which might serve to clear the doctrine of justification. The one is in these two verses, *viz.* Whether this way of justification by faith be meant only in reference to the Jews, or in reference to the Gentiles also? and thus it is proposed: *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles?* That is, is he thus a reconciled God, or a God in covenant to the Jews who have the law of Moses? and is he not thus also reconciled to the Gentiles, who have not the law? As if he had said, *In* this way of justification by faith, without the works of the law, common both to Jew and Gentile? He answereth, *Yes*, it is common to both. And why? because *it is one God*, or God is one, *who shall justify the circumcision*, or the Jews who were circumcised, *by faith, and the uncircumcision*, or the Gentiles, *through faith.* As if he had said, There is but one God, and so but one way of becoming his people; he dealeth not one way with one people, and another way with another people: Or, God is the same unchangeable Jehovah, who is constant in all his promises, both these which he made before, as to Adam, and after the difference began betwixt Jew and Gentile; and therefore he becometh reconciled to all, after one and the same manner, for *he is no acceptor of persons.* This *by faith*, and *through faith*, are materially the same, as Rom. xi. 36. (and even the Gentiles are said to be justified by faith, Gal. iv. 7.) hereby shewing, that for all the good things that were among the Jews, who had the law, yet only their faith was taken notice

notice of as to their justification; and the Gentiles had an open door to the privileges of the Sons of God, even *through faith*. His expressing of the same thing thus diversly, was to give a check unto the pride of the Jews, who would still have some difference put betwixt them and the Gentiles; therefore he says, If you will have a difference put, it is only in this, that you are justified by faith, and they through faith.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Men are apt to think that God will value more, and deal after another manner with, those who have been favoured with external privileges, (as if these would commend them more to him, and he saw as men seeth) than with those who have never enjoyed such; for this is the ground of this question which the apostle propoundeth, and cleareth, for the satisfaction of the Romans, saying, *Is he the God of the Jews only? &c.*

II. Tho' all flesh have forfeited their interest in God as theirs by covenant, by transgressing his law; yet there is a possibility, and a way found out, in the depth of his wisdom, who *doth all things according to the good pleasure of his will*, how this covenant interest may be renewed; and he may become a God again to some peculiarly, in a covenant way; for the apostle says, he is *God* to some both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

III. This interest will not be, so long as justice is not satisfied for the wrong done, and the breach made; but ere God become a covenanted God to any, they must be justified, and so acquitted from all their former guilt; for the apostle clears him to be *God* to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, because he *justifieth both*; so that he is not a God to any but whom he justifieth, and justification will clearly evince a covenant interest in God.

IV. Seeing *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, whatever differ-

ence there be otherways among people, in respect of external enjoyments, there is one and the same way for all, of what rank, condition, or quality they be, of winning in favour with God, and no way but one: for he is *the God of the Gentiles*, as well as *of the Jews*, and *one God*, and *justifieth the one and the other by faith*.

V. This way of getting an interest in God, as it is none of our invention, so it is a business carried on wholly in a manner without us, we being rather passive than active therein; and a business in which the hand of God is eminently and allenarly to be seen; for, says he, *it is one God who justifieth*: he both fell upon this device, and he carrieth it on; he justifieth us, and not we ourselves.

VI. Sinners, have they never so many privileges to dote on, must, ere they be justified, come out of themselves, grip to, and rest upon another, even Jesus Christ; he must be *received*, John i. 11. stayed on, and *trusted in*, Isa. xxvi. 3. 4. and without this fiducial act of faith, staying on, rolling the soul upon, firmly adhering and leaning, and humbly submitting unto, and relying upon Jesus Christ, there is no justification; for *he is the justifier even of the uncircumcision, by faith*.

VII. There is no condition a people can be in, but if they will cast themselves over on Christ, and renouncing their own strength and righteousness, will wholly rest upon him for salvation, they shall be accepted and justified; for *he is the justifier of the uncircumcision through faith*.

VERSE 21. *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

HERE the apostle answereth another question, or rather removes an objection which might be started against what he had delivered through his whole discourse anent sinners justification by faith, without

without the works of the law; for it might be objected, By this your doctrine, crying up faith and down works, in the matter of justification, you seem to make the law null and void, as being useleſs, and of none effect, without any force or efficacy: but this is not right, and therefore your doctrine is the more to be suspected. He answereth, by denying that his doctrine tendeth to make void the law; yea, rather, ſays he, by this doctrine of justification by faith I eſtabliſh the law, both ceremonial and moral, in that hereby it is made apparent, that Chriſt was pointed out by the ceremonial law, as the only Lamb taking away the ſins of the world; and as for the moral law, that is eſtabliſhed alſo, in that hereby is made manifeſt, that the penalty thereof is ſuffered by him, even death; and that he fulfilled all righteouſneſs, and did every thing which the law required; and in that hereby believer's are not left looſe to walk as they pleaſe, but are the more conſtrained by the law of love and thankfulneſs to yield obedience, and are enabled in part to walk in conformity thereto: therefore ſays he, *yea, we eſtabliſh the law.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Enemies to truth, who love not to receive the ſame in love, are ready to ſpread abroad their diſſatisfaction very liberally, and to load the truth with baſe and foul calumnies, according to their pleaſure; for theſe that liked not the doctrine of faith, were ready to reproach it with this, that hereby the law was altogether rendered uſeleſs, and ſo object, that Paul *made void the law through faith.*

II. Licentious ſpirits, who love not to be bound by the law of God, liking rather to walk according to the luſts of their own heart, are ready to turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, and to ſuck rank poiſon from the moſt comfortable points of truth; for even from the doc-

trine of faith ſome were ready to gather a lawleſs liberty, or rather licentiousneſs, to caſt aſide all law, and ſay, *the law is made void through faith.*

III. It is no new thing to ſee men of corrupt minds, loving to follow pernicious principles, ſmoothing over their corrupt opinions with fair and ſpecious colours, and pretending a goſpel privilege warranting them thereto, and ſo with fair ſhews of reaſon and plauſible pretexts, hide their damnable and ſoul-deſtroying deſigns and practices: for even in Paul's days there were ſome ready to lay aſide all law, under pretext of faith in Chriſt, and cry out, *The law is void by faith.*

IV. Tho' many unſtable ſouls, who have not the truth rooted in their hearts, may ſoon be deceived with fair pretences, and ſuch grounds as a deceived heart, ſet on work by Satan to deceive, may make appear very plauſible; yet it is the duty of all ſo much the more to abhor theſe errors, as they pretend to ſhelter themſelves under the wings of comfortable goſpel-truths, and to reject them, not without a teſtimony of abhorrence, as the apoſtle doth here, ſaying, *God forbid.*

V. Albeit there be no poſſibility now of being juſtified and abſolved before God from the guilt of a broken covenant, by fulfilling the law; but now the only way is by fleeing in unto, and embracing of Chriſt by faith; yet is not the bridle laid on the neck of believers, as if they were no more to ſtudy conformity unto the law of God, nor as if it were a law wholly abrogated and laid aſide, as to all its uſes and ends: for when the objection is propoſed thus, Then *the law is made void by faith*; he answereth, *God forbid.*

VI. As Chriſt was the end of the law for righteouſneſs, and ſo fulfilled all that was typified of him in the ceremonial law, and alſo did and ſuffered all which we were bound to do and ſuffer by the moral law, and hereby ſtrengthened and eſtabliſhed the law of righteouſneſs; ſo our

resting on what Christ did and suffered, for justification and salvation, is so far from allowing us to cast at the law as a rule of righteousness, that, on the contrary, it

lays strong bonds and obligations on believers to glorify their Lord Redeemer by a christian conversation : *Yea, says the apostle, we establish the law.*



CHAPTER IV.

AFTER the apostle has thus confirmed, and from solid undeniable reason concluded, that we are justified by faith, without the deeds of the law, he now brings forth an example to clear and illustrate the matter, (examples being of great force to that effect) and also to confirm it; it being hereby made out, that it was no new doctrine that he was here teaching; and the example is of Abraham, an example which they could not reject, having always him in their mouths, Matth. iii. 9. John viii. 39. and so glorying much in him whom they all accounted to be *the father of the faithful*; and for this cause he pitcheth on this example; as also because it would prove a most convincing argument: for if Abraham, a rare example of virtue, was not justified by works, then no man could expect to be justified by works; therefore he proveth that Abraham was not justified by works, to verse 9. then proposeth a question much like that answered, chapter iii. 29. 30. if there be one way of attaining righteousness both to the Jew and Gentile? This he answereth affirmatively, and cleareth up the way how, together with other difficulties that arise by the way, to the end.

VERSES 1. 2. *What shall we say then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*

For if Abraham were justified by works,

he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.

HIS argument is this; If Abraham be not justified by works, then no man is justified by works. This they would not question, seeing they all accounted him *the father of the faithful*, and looked on him as a most eminent man in holiness: But Abraham was not justified by works. This he first sets down, verse 1. by way of question, *What shall we say that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?* That is, can ye, or I either, say, that Abraham our father (so he calls him, lest they should think that he had made defection from the faith of Father Abraham) was justified, or attained righteousness, as pertaining to the flesh, that is, by the works of the law, (for sometimes the commands of the law are stiled *carnal*, Heb. vii. 16.) or works done in his own strength, after the way of the flesh; for to have confidence in the flesh, and in our own righteousness which is of the law, is all one, Phil. iii. 3. with 9. Now, would he say, you cannot make it out, that Abraham was so justified. And thus he puts them to it, by proposing the question to them, and in that it is left unanswered, it is equivalent to a flat denial. Now, after this proposition is thus set down, he confirms it with one argument, verse 2. saying, *If Abraham were justified*

ſed by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. The argument may be conceived thus: Whoever is juſtified by works, hath ground of boaſting and glorying before God, as giving ſomething of his own, deſerving a reward in juſtice: But Abraham hath no ground of boaſting and glorying before God; Therefore, &c. And this argument he ſo propoſeth as thereby answering an objection which might be moved in their mind at that which he ſaid, verſe 1. They might ſay, did Abraham acquire nothing by his holy life and converſation? Did he not acquire the praiſe and commendation of men? Yes, ſays the apoſtle, *he hath whereof to glory*, after that kind; his works made him honourable with men, who look only to the outward face of actions, but he hath no ground of glorying before God; for before him all boaſting was excluded, as we heard before, in the laſt chapter, verſe 27.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. In that the apoſtle maketh uſe of the inſtance of Abraham, to prove juſtification by faith, without the works of the law, it teacheth us theſe four things: 1^{ſt}, That in this diſpute againſt Juſtitiaries, who were enemies to the truth, in the point of juſtification, he doth not only ſpeak of the ceremonial law, and of works done according to it, ſo as his meaning ſhould be, when he ſays, we are not juſtified by the works or deeds of the law, that we are not juſtified by theſe works enjoined by the ceremonial law; for Abraham was long before the ceremonial law had any being, and ſo had not been a fit inſtance to have proved no juſtification by works; beſides, that it can hardly be, upon good grounds, thought, that thoſe Juſtitiaries did mean only the works of the ceremonial law, excluding all other. 2^{dly}, That in this diſpute he takes in the works of the moral law; for ſeeing he muſt not mean only the ceremonial law, as we ſhew-

ed, and no man once dreamed of meaning the judicial law, he muſt, the law muſt, be taken as comprehending the moral, no leſs than the ceremonial. 3^{dly}, That in this diſpute he means not only the works of the moral law, done by the light of nature, or by unregenerate perſons without grace; for he brings in Abraham's inſtance, as he was a believer, and *the father of the faithful*; and ſo, queſtionleſs, one who was regenerated, and did many a good work, as Gen. xxii. and yet he denies that he was juſtified by his works. 4^{thly}, But taketh in the conſideration of the works of regenerate perſons, for ſuch an one was Abraham, and excludeth all ſuch works from being the meritorious cauſe of juſtification, either in whole, or in part.

II. However under the Old Teſtament the covenant of grace was adminiſtered in another manner than under the New, and Chriſt was not then exhibited, but only held forth as one to come, by promiſes, prophecies, ſacrifices, ſacraments, types, and other ceremonies: yet there was but one way of juſtification, then and now; Chriſt, the meritorious cauſe of juſtification, being *the Lamb ſlain from the beginning of the world*, and his righteouſneſs being only that which muſt cloath us, and faith being *then* the way of applying this righteouſneſs, as *now*: therefore doth he make uſe of Abraham's inſtance to prove the manner of our juſtification now, which could not be, if the way were not the ſame both under the Old Teſtament, and under the New.

III. Juſtification, and the right way thereof, being a matter of great neceſſity to be known, and a truth which Satan hath early and late bent his ſtrength againſt, a great neceſſity lieth upon all to be thoroughly clear in this matter; and miniſters ſhould labour to explain it fully unto people, and take pains, and uſe all means to make plain the way, and to confirm them in the truth thereof: therefore after the

apostle had used arguments before, he now cometh to clear it from the example of Abraham, for their farther satisfaction.

IV. Old Testament scriptures, are yet in force to us under the gospel, and may safely be made use of to confirm or illustrate truths; for the apostle bringeth in here an Old Testament example, to confirm and clear a gospel truth.

V. Whatever excellencies or endowments any have whereby they excel others, yet in the matter of justification, all these being but dross and dung, yea even their righteousness being but rotten rags, Isa. lxiv. 6. they have no pre-eminence beyond others, but being plunged into the same gulph of sin, must be beholden to another no less than any, for their delivery: and this may abundantly convince such as are far short of these, in parts, moral virtues, and Christian walk, of a necessity of fleeing out of themselves for a righteousness, whereby they may be justified before God: for Paul, as an argument proving no justification by works, brings in Abraham's instance, saying, *What shall we say then, that Abraham our father hath attained? &c.*

VI. Whatever praise and commendation men may acquire to themselves from men like themselves, for some heroic acts and notable exploits; yet in point of acceptance with God, all these being but pieces of their duty, so as still they must stile themselves, *unprofitable servants*, Luke xvii. 10. they have no ground of boasting notwithstanding of all these; for *if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.*

VERSES 3. 4. 5. *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

HERE is another argument proving, that Abraham was justified by faith, without the works of the law, whereby also the former reason is confirmed. It may shortly be taken up thus: The scripture saith that Abraham was not justified by faith, because the scripture saith, that *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness*, Gen. xv. 6. therefore he was not justified by works. The consequence he confirmeth in the following verse, thus: To have faith imputed for righteousness makes the reward of grace, and not of debt; but to have works imputed for righteousness makes the reward of debt, and not of grace: therefore whoever is justified by faith, or by having faith imputed for righteousness, is not justified by works; this is set down ver. 4. and the ground of all is laid down ver. 5. *faith is counted for righteousness, not to him that worketh*; that is, trusteth and relieth upon his works: *but to him that believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly*. So then, in short, there is, 1. The scripture proof laid down, that *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness*. 2. A deduction or inference from this, applying it to the purpose: if it was counted to him for righteousness in that he believed, then not as he was a worker. And, 3. a reason of this, because what is counted to folk as works, is a reward of debt, and not of grace; but this is of grace, for it was counted to him for righteousness.

Because there is some difficulty in the words, we shall a little farther explain them, that our way may be facilitated in raising points, and for that cause lay down some considerations.

1st, The words here cited are taken out of Gen. xv. 6. where the Lord is renewing his promise which he had made with Abraham before, chapter xii. and thereby strengthening Abraham's faith, who was doubting ever to see his own issue. Now, it is said, *Abraham believed*

in God, and here it is, *Abraham believed God*, according to the Seventy, whose version the apostle followeth punctually; but all is one, faith being both a trusting of God, a giving of him credit in all he speaks, and also a fiducial recumbence and resting upon him; it is a putting of our trust and confidence in him, to adhere and cleave to him, as faithful and true.

2dly, Abraham's believing here doth not relate unto that promise which God made with him, *viz. of making his seed as the stars of heaven for multitude*, verse 5. alienarily, and to nothing else; but it respecteth the covenant whereof that was but a particular promise. This covenant being a covenant of grace, all the promises thereof flowed from grace, many whereof were temporal, which were given as types of spiritual blessings; but the main promises were, that *in him all the families of the earth should be blessed*, Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. and xxii. 18. and that *the Lord would be his God, and the God of his seed*, Gen. xvii. 7. 8. And thus God promised to be his father, portion, protector, strong refuge, and all; and for this cause he held forth himself to be God, almighty and all-sufficient: and to these main blessings was the promise of temporal good things annexed; as protection, Gen. xv. 1. multiplicity of seed, and the land of Canaan. So then Abraham closed with the covenant by faith; and especially his faith respected Christ the promised seed, *in whom all the nations should be blessed*, and *in whom all the promises are yea, and amen*; and who was wraped up in all these promises: as, for example, in that, that *his seed should multiply so*, and that he should be *the heir of the world*, for that promise is not meant of his carnal seed, or *seed through the law*, as the apostle says, in this same chapter, verse 13. and so must be meant of his spiritual seed, who are brought in under Christ's kingdom, according to Psalm ii. 8. So that his believing God, must not be meant only of his

believing that particular promise mentioned immediately before. 1. Because that this faith of his was a justifying faith, or a faith whereby remission of sins was had, seeing the apostle makes use of it here in the matter of justification, as an argument to prove justification by faith; and so Abraham's faith must be such a faith as may agree to more than himself alone, but a faith in such a particular promise cannot be required of all, seeing such a promise is not made to all. 2. Beside, that Abraham was justified before now, and was a believer also, and is said to believe now, because his faith got up its head, and got from under the difficulty with which it was wrestling before, and so was confirmed from the promise renewed. So then this faith of Abraham's was a justifying faith, and so of the same essence and nature with the faith required of us under the gospel, and therefore it looked to Christ the promised Messiah, who was the main piece of his seed so much spoken of, as the apostle expounds Gal. iii. 16. and *Abraham saw his day*, John viii. 56.

3dly, That the following words, *and it was imputed to him for righteousness*, may be somewhat cleared, take notice of these particulars: 1. That in the original it may be taken up thus: *And he imputed righteousness to him*, or (taking the verb impersonaliter, as almost all do) *righteousness was imputed to him*. The verb hath an affix of the feminine gender annexed, which says, it must look back to some noun of the feminine gender; and is it not better to take the noun rendered *righteousness*, which is of the feminine gender, than to go and pick it out of the verb, *he believed*? And if we take the words thus, all will be clear; thus, *Abraham believed God, and God imputed righteousness to him*; that is, Abraham believed God, or in God, and thereby was clothed with the righteousness of another, *viz. Christ*, through God's imputation. 2. The cause why the apostle

has the words otherways rendered, is, because he followeth the Seventy, their version being at that time most in use, and doth not alter one letter, seeing that the same version made abundantly for his purpose, and was no way contrary to the text, but consonant enough thereto. So then, 3. the apostle hereby meaneth, that his faith was imputed to him for righteousness, for so he saith, verses 5. 9. Bur, 4. By *faith* the apostle doth not understand the act of faith, simply so understood, without respect unto Christ the object thereof: not as if I thought true justifying faith could be taken up without respect to Christ, that were a contradiction, to understand that faith, the nature whereof looks to Christ, could be considered without looking to Christ; but my meaning is, that the apostle being about to clear the way of our justification not to be by works, as the meritorious cause thereof, and the way of obtaining the same; but by Christ's merits, as the meritorious cause, apprehended and laid hold on by faith; or by faith looking only to Christ's death and merits, as the meritorious cause: faith, properly taken, cannot be accounted to us as our righteousness, as if we were clothed with no other righteousness beside that; but faith tropically taken, that is, for Christ, who is sometimes called *our righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30. Jer. xxiii. 6. as hope is sometimes taken for the thing hoped for, Gal. v. 5. Col. i. 5. 27. 1 Tim. i. 1. Tit. ii. 13. And that, (1.) because if faith were taken properly here, it were impertinent to the apostle's purpose to alledge this testimony; for his main dispute is about the meritorious cause of our justification, and not about the mean, or condition, or instrumental cause thereof, except by the bye, and still opposeth faith to works; and so whatever way he excludes works, he must take in faith: and if he be treating mainly of the condition of justification, and faith be imputed to us as our righteousness on that account, then works

must be wholly excluded from being the condition, principally, or less principally, of our justification; and if he be excluding works from being the meritorious cause, then faith must be taken in upon that score, and not properly taken, for so it is a work, but as looking to its object: Or rather it is taken for its object, Christ, viz. griped and laid hold on by faith: and thus faith, with its object, answereth the place which works had in the old covenant, viz. both the meritorious cause, and the applicatory medium; for works in the old covenant did merit life, (not strictly, for we can merit nothing from God so, but so as life should have become a due debt, by virtue of a paction) and was the way or mean of applying this; so in the new covenant, faith taken for its object, Christ, is the meritorious cause; and faith, properly taken, as our act, is the medium; one thing cannot be both, now as before. It is true, faith may be called our righteousness, as being the performance of a duty required, and we affirm that it is necessary as the condition of our justification, but we cannot think, that it can be said to be imputed to us for righteousness here, I mean, faith properly taken, for the reason formerly alledged. And farther, because, (2.) in the original, as I shewed before, it may read thus: *He imputed righteousness to him*, or, *righteousness was imputed to him*; and so Paul's saying, faith was imputed for righteousness, therein following the Seventy, must bear a sense corresponding with the Hebrew. (3.) Moreover, if faith were imputed to us for righteousness, taking faith only as our act, so as the meaning should not be, Christ received by faith is our righteousness, but the act of faith is our righteousness, then faith should not be imputed to us by grace, but as a due debt; God's imputation should not be an act of grace, but an act of justice, and a due debt, which were also contrary to the apostle's scope: and why so? because faith is granted to be a part

of our inherent righteousness, and so it is ours before, in a manner, and doth not become ours by imputation; as when guilt is imputed to the guilty man, it is but accounting of him guilty who was so before; so this should be only God's accounting of us righteous who were so before; and this will not make the reward of grace, but of debt; for what is accounted by grace is not in the subject, or is not that really in the room whereof it is accounted; but faith, according to this exposition, is in the subject, and is really that in the room whereof it is accounted. (4.) Beside, if we took the apostle's meaning to be thus, we could see no consequence in his arguing; for he is here proving that Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith; and what is his argument? it is this; The scripture saith, that his faith was counted to him for righteousness; therefore he was not justified by works. Now let us put in their exposition, and see how it will run: The scripture saith, that his work of faith was counted to him for righteousness; therefore he was not justified by works: Would this be a clear demonstration? he was justified by one work, therefore not by works! Or thus, One work was imputed to him for righteousness, therefore works was not imputed: any body may perceive the vanity of this arguing. If it be replied, that faith is only accounted for our evangelic righteousness, in subordination to Christ's righteousness, which only is the meritorious cause, and is still set in opposition to works, that have no share here: I answer, 1. It is granted, that faith may be called so, taking the meaning to be only this; Faith is that mean appointed of God, whereby we apply Christ's righteousness, to our justification; but the apostle's arguing necessitates us to take faith and works as diametrically opposite, and as *ad idem*: so that upon whatever score works be excluded, upon the same score faith is included; so that if works be excluded as the meritorious cause, faith

must be looked on as the meritorious cause, and therefore faith must not be taken properly, otherways faith, as a work, should be the meritorious cause; and why then should Paul exclude all works? 2. It were loose arguing to say, Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith; that is, Abraham was not justified by works as the meritorious cause, making the reward of debt, because the scripture saith, faith was the condition of justification, and upon that score was imputed to him as his righteousness. Now, where is the reason of the connection here? Sure there is none; unless you say, that faith being imputed as a condition, doth lay down for granted, and presuppose Christ's righteousness as the meritorious cause; for faith that doth not this, is not faith. That is true, that faith presupposeth that, but then it is Christ's merits properly that stand in opposition to works; and the main strength of the apostle's argument is here, *viz.* in Christ's righteousness, laid hold on by faith, and this is it which is imputed for righteousness; and this is that which we say. (5.) This will be farther clear, if we consider how the apostle says afterward, that *righteousness is imputed*, see verses 6. 11. and here either the meaning must be, that faith is imputed, and so faith and righteousness shall be all one; or the apostle is speaking of the imputation of a double righteousness, both of Christ's righteousness (which must be that other righteousness distinct from faith, and will be readily granted) and of faith. The first, I hope, will not be affirmed, and this last cannot be said, because (not as if I affirmed that the apostle were not both speaking of Christ's righteousness, as imputed to us, and of faith, as the way how, or condition upon which it is imputed; for this I grant; only I say, that the meaning of these words, *faith is imputed for righteousness*, is not, that faith, as our act, is accounted our righteousness, and properly imputed to us) then the apostle's arguing

guing would be lax: For, (1.) These two righteousnesses are very far different, and the one cannot be the other; and how should we then know when the apostle is speaking of the one, and when of the other? and except we know this, we shall see no certainty in the apostle's dispute. If it be said, that where faith is not named, there the righteousness is Christ's righteousness, and so it will be clear. I answer, We find even that righteousness of Christ called *the righteousness of faith*, verse 11. for, I suppose, this is mainly sealed by the sacrament. Farther, (2.) If we look ver. 6th, we will find the business more clear, and see, that when *faith is imputed unto righteousness*, it is the same with *righteousness imputed without works*; for the apostle is confirming what he said of Abraham, and the manner of his justification, by David's words, as is clear by these words, *even as*. Now, what was he saying of Abraham? that faith, as his act or work, was imputed to him for righteousness, as say our adversaries; and how doth David's words confirm this? Truly I cannot see: For, 1. The proofs, verses 7. 8. *Blessed are they whose sins are forgiven*, &c. Now, where is the connection, Abraham's act of believing was counted to him for righteousness, because the man is blessed who hath his sins forgiven? But, 2. That which the apostle is about to prove is set down, verse 6. *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man; of what man? the man unto whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works*: That is, the man unto whom God imputeth the righteousness of Christ without works, and therefore this man must be a man like Abraham; this being brought farther to confirm and illustrate the former instance of Abraham; so that the man that has his faith counted to him for righteousness, must be the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works; so that righteousness imputed, and faith imputed to righteousness, must be all one: for if it

be said, that this place out of the Psalms is brought as another confirmation of the prime thesis, and not of the last argument brought from Abraham's instance, because that the thesis is set down *de novo*, verse 8. and so though here the righteousness of Christ be understood, yet that will not hinder why faith may not be properly taken, when it is said to be imputed for our righteousness. I answer, 1st, I will not much contend about the analysis, tho' to me it seemeth clear, that these words, verses 6. 7. 8. be casten in, as it were, in a parenthesis, to confirm and illustrate what he said last, after which, immediately, he returns to the instance of Abraham, upon whom he spends all the chapter. 2^{dly}, But be it so, this will not help the matter, for then the main thesis must be this, We are justified thro' that righteousness which God imputeth without works; but then, I pray, how will Abraham's instance prove this thesis, which only proveth that we are justified by faith imputed for righteousness? If the main thesis be concerning the meritorious cause, an argument only proving the conditional cause, will not be conclusive; for they are two distinct questions: for what are we justified? and by what, as a mean, condition, or instrument on our part, are we justified? And if it be said, that the apostle proveth the complex thesis, including both the meritorious and conditional cause, viz. That we are justified by faith in Christ, or by the righteousness of Christ, applied and laid hold on by faith. I answer, 1st, That is true; but then an argument which only proveth the conditional cause, will not prove the meritorious cause. And, 2^{dly}, By Abraham's instance the apostle is mainly proving the meritorious cause, saying, *What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?* and then excluding works, which our adversary will not exclude from being the condition of justification; and, withal, takes in faith as the

medium, or condition. Then, you will say, if what proveth the meritorious cause will infer the conditional, so what proveth the conditional will infer the meritorious. I answer, 1. Strictly neither will infer the other. 2. Paul is proving both, considered complexly. And, 3. Then faith, as our act, cannot be said to be imputed to us for righteousness, but faith must be understood with relation to its object, Christ; and so the meaning should be, Christ laid hold on by faith is imputed to us for righteousness: and this is that which we say. *Lastly*, Let it be granted that faith is here taken properly for our act, yet it will not follow, that it is imputed to us as our righteousness: nor is this righteousness to be taken for that which they call our evangelic righteousness, but rather for Christ's righteousness, which they call our legal righteousness; and that because the words run thus, *And his faith was imputed to him unto righteousness*, and not *for righteousness*; for the preposition *unto* which is used in all the places of this chapter, where this business is spoken of, doth not signify *for*, (nor any where else, so far as I know) but *unto*, according to the parallel place, Rom. x. 10. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*: where it is clear, that believing is not called our righteousness, but the way and mean whereby we apprehend righteousness, and by which the righteousness imputed, or the righteousness of Christ, becomes ours, even as confession with the mouth is the way and mean of salvation, and no other way imputed for salvation. And so here when faith is said to be imputed unto righteousness, the meaning is, that faith is looked upon as the only way whereby righteousness becometh ours, and for that end is imputed to us as ours. Now, as this will be granted to be a truth, so we think it will no way be unsuitable to the apostle's scope, but will clearly prove, that Abraham was justified

by faith, and not by works. Thus, Abraham believed God, and that act of his, closing with the covenant, and resting upon the free grace of God therein held forth, was accounted the way how, or whereby he was put in possession of that righteousness held forth in the covenant; therefore he was not justified by works. 5. For the farther explaining of these words, *it was imputed to him for righteousness*, take notice of the word *imputed*; and for clearing this, in short, know, That the words in the original Hebrew and Greek, rendered *to impute*, hath various significations, as, *to think, devise, repute, compute, esteem, conclude*; but ordinarily, *to cast up an account, and find out the summa totalis, or the quotient*; and properly, (as to our matter in hand) *to account, repute, or reckon unto any man any thing to be his, or him to be the cause of it, be it good or evil, whether it be so or not*. Sins are said to be imputed justly, when the man is indeed guilty, as Heb. xvii. 4. Rom. v. 18. and unjustly, when the man is not guilty; so good things are imputed unjustly, as when the wicked are acquitted; or justly, as Psalm cxi. 31. and so is every thing imputed which is of due debt; but so it is not taken here, but for an imputation of good by grace, when what is imputed is no way deserved, but an act of free grace; and so the righteousness here imputed is made over to believers, and they accepted for that cause, as if it were there own; as the cautioner's payment of the debt is made over to the principal debtor, and he therefore acquitted as if he had paid the debt himself: this is an imputation of grace not unjust, being upon relevant grounds and considerations. 6. *Righteousness*, here, must not be taken for a particular righteousness of any particular fact, as was that of Phineas, Psalm cvi. which would have appeared to be unjust and unlawful, because he was but a private person, and therefore it being done in zeal the Lord did approve thereof, and in this sense it is said to have been

imputed to him for righteousness, or as a righteous act; but for universal righteousness, seeing he is speaking of a righteousness in the matter of justification.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The Spirit of God speaking in the scriptures, being the final judge and determiner of controversies, and that being a solid ground on which we may rest, as touching truth held forth in it, ministers should be careful to confirm their assertions from the scripture, seeing that is only able to satisfy conscience; and people ought to rest upon the verdict of the scripture as sufficiently satisfactory, and therefore ought to be well acquainted with the Word: all which we are taught by the apostle's saying, *What saith the scripture?*

II. Faith, whereby we are justified, receiveth the word of the Lord as his word, and believes it because it is his word, 1 Thess. ii. 13. and fiducially confides in, and resteth upon God, and cleaveth to him, as faithful and able to make good all his promises; so *Abraham believed in God, or upon God.*

III. Sincere and lively faith will cause a man sit silent in the dust, and be quiet, so as not to question whatever the Lord promiseth, be it never so contrary to sense and reason, but will certainly expect the accomplishment; so did Abraham, in the cited place, believe, even when the Lord had promised what seemed most unlikely, viz. That his seed should be as the stars for multitude, even then *he believed God.*

IV. The best that steps being defiled with sin, have nothing in themselves for which they may expect to be accepted of God; whatever righteousness it be for which they are accepted, it is not grounded upon any thing in themselves; for even Abraham has need to have a *righteousness imputed to him*, and so he has none of his own.

V. Seeing man, as to the attaining of a righteousness for which he will be justified before God must go wholly out of

himself, and look for it in another, his pride may fall, and his glorying may be at an end; for the apostle confirmeth that Abraham had nothing to glory of before God, he saith, that he had righteousness imputed to him; so that the more a man look for in himself, the greater is his pride, and true humility will carry a man quite out of himself.

VI. As it is for the righteousness of Christ that a man is justified, first and last, and by faith that this righteousness is applied to us as ours; so the best way for such as are unclear touching their estate, to get it helped, is, to flee in of new to Christ, and grip the promise by faith, seeing it is not only true at the first, but even afterward, that *faith is imputed for righteousness*; the righteousness of Christ is always the meritorious cause, and faith the mean whereby it is applied: for tho' Abraham was a believer before, and so was justified, yet it is now said, that *he believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

VII. Howbeit faith may not be looked on as our righteousness, in whole or in part, as if it were accepted of God as making up any part of the price due to justice, yet can we not be justified without it; there is such a ~~fast~~ ^{strait} tie betwixt the righteousness of Christ, and faith whereby it is made ours, or applied to us, that the one is put for the other; therefore *faith is said to be imputed*, for, the righteousness of Christ applied by faith.

VIII. Albeit man did owe to God, his Creator, rational obedience, and God was no way in justice obliged to have rewarded the same with life, man doing but his duty and when he had done all, was but an *unprofitable servant*; yet it pleased the Lord to condescend so far as to be a debtor covenant-ways unto man, and, of free grace, to bind himself by promise, to reward him according to his work which he was to do in his own strength, being put into a capacity to have acted, and so to make a pro

portion betwixt his work and his wages, so as Adam was to have wrought so much, and then to have had right unto the hire, or wages: And the more any look to themselves, and expect good from God for any thing in themselves, the more they turn from the way of grace, and betake them to the old way of works: for *to him that worketh*, that is, to him that looketh and trusteth to his works, *is the reward reckoned not of grace, but of debt.*

IX. Whatever course we take, whereby we think God, in strict justice obliged to reward us, and accept of us, is a course diametrically opposite unto the way of justification which the Lord has now carved out, seeing that is a way of free grace: for *to him that worketh, the reward it not reckoned of grace.*

X. The way now, after man's fall, of acquiring a righteousness, is not by any thing which we can do, but by faith going out to Christ for the same; for *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness.*

XI. Howbeit faith be necessary as a mean, whereby Christ's righteousness, the only meritorious cause of our justification, becometh ours, and it, laying hold on Christ; or his righteousness laid hold on by it, is said to be imputed unto us; yet it cannot be so imputed, as if we were thereby formally or meritoriously justified, nor so as if it were accepted of God, thro' his mere grace and gracious acceptation, as our complete and perfect righteousness, whether without the satisfaction made by Christ, or with it, so as that Christ only purchased, that faith should be accepted for our complete righteousness, and instead of perfect fulfilling of the law; for so faith and works should not be opposed, nor should our righteousness be complete, our faith having many defects; nor is Christ any where said to die, that faith might be so accounted; and thus we should be justified by our own righteousness, contrary to

Phil. iii. 9. *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, &c.* For to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned of grace, but to him that believeth his faith is counted to him for righteousness.

XII. Man being now plunged in guilt, hath nothing of his own wherewith to make satisfaction unto the justice of God, but is altogether *born in sin, filthy and unclean*, John ix. 34. and cannot please God, Heb. xi. 6. and whatever they do is *sin*, Prov. xxi. 4. 27. yea, he cannot so much as prepare and dispose himself for justification; he can do nothing which may merit justification; for justification, when it cometh, findeth the sinner liable to condemnation, and in a state of sin; for *he justifieth the ungodly.*

XIII. Albeit man, when God comes to justify him, be lying in sin, under guilt, *in sensu diviso*; yet doth not God justify any person *in sensu composito*, that is, None abiding in their natural condition, and in actual rebellion, are made partakers of this privilege; but ere a sinner can be justified he must believe in Christ; and thus his *faith is counted to him for righteousness.*

XIV. Such is the freedom of God's rich grace in welcoming of sinners, that his hands are stretched out to all without exception, who will come and believe in him, whatever foul and sinful persons they have been before; wherefore he is said to *justify the ungodly* indefinitely.

XV. Sense of former guilt should be so far from scaring poor sinners from coming to Christ, when called to come in the gospel, that they should so much the rather step forward, considering how it is only such whom God justifieth, and no other; so as their guilt renders them not incapable of justification, but rather, being now mourned for, the soul flying in to Christ, doth nearly capacitate them therefore. And true sincere justifying faith looks out on God, and takes him up to be one who is willing and ready to accept of sinners, and to welcome all that

come, be what they will; for it is said here, ----*believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly*; which is a description of the object of justifying faith, and so faith must take him up under that notion.

VERSES 6. 7. 8 *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,*

Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

THIS that the apostle said last of the instance of Abraham, viz. that he was justified by faith without works, or that his faith was counted to him for righteousness, seeing he believed God, he farther cleareth and confirmeth from the words of the prophet David, out of Psalm xxxii. (which also serveth to confirm his main thesis touching justification by faith, without the works of the law) to this purpose: David beareth witness to the truth of this, and therefore it must be a truth: and so he first sets down the proposition he is about to confirm, verse 6. *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works*: where we see that God's imputing righteousness without works, is all one with faith's being imputed unto righteousness, so as the righteousness here said to be imputed, must be another righteousness than the act of faith, for faith in this sense is a work, and so righteousness should not be imputed without works indefinitely, but his meaning should be, righteousness is imputed without all works except faith, which would cross all the apostle's arguments; beside that, the argument from the Psalms would no way be suitable unto this purpose; for how will the non-imputation of sin, or free remission, prove the imputation of faith as our

work, or that the act of faith is here meant to be our righteousness? So then the righteousness here spoken of, must be the righteousness of another, even the righteousness which faith lays hold on, a righteousness whereof works make up no part; therefore it is said to be *without works*. Now, his argument proving this, is taken from the free remission of sins which is granted in justification, to this purpose: If in justification we have remission of sins freely granted, our iniquities be covered, and sin be not imputed to us, then righteousness is imputed without works. The truth of this is founded on these two: 1. That free remission excludes all merit by works on our part, for what we purchase by our own works is not freely given. And, 2. That imputed righteousness and pardon are inseparable, and are so nearly conjoined, that the one may be concluded or gathered from the other; for to whomsoever the Lord imputeth righteousness, to these he doth not impute sin, whether that be the ground of this or not, is not very material to determine. So then this benefit of remission of sins is here set down according to the words of the Psalmist, Psalm xxxii. 1. in three several expressions: 1. *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven*; where, as in other places, the apostle followeth the Seventy, for the Hebrew word here rendered *forgiven*, will signify *to lighten*, or *take off*; so that the meaning will be, *Blessed is the man who is eased or exonerate of his transgressions*; but all is one, for the remission of sin is the taking of it away; and this holds forth sin to be a debt that must be forgiven, or a heavy burden that is unsupportable, and must be taken off; or both, a grievous burdensome debt that cannot be born, but of necessity we must be eased of. 2. *Whose sins are covered*; and this holdeth forth sin to be a filthy loathsome thing that must be covered from the eyes of the Lord. 3. *Not imputing of sin*, which pointeth forth sin to be a guilt making men liable

to punishment, and must not be laid to the sinner's charge.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Howbeit men and women walk lightly under sin, being dead and senseless, so as they cannot feel any weight or burden; yet sin, in effect, is an unsupportable burden that will crush sinners, if they be not eased; and is as a debt which they of themselves will never be able to pay, or satisfy for: for here it is said to be *pardoned, or lifted up*.

II. As sin is such a burden, so is it a burden of filth; it is a loathsome and abominable thing, however sinners look upon it as the matter of gloriation, and do boast themselves, and pride themselves in it, as if it were their glory, when as it is their shame, and makes them so odious in God's sight, as he cannot away with them, nor suffer it; he cannot behold it, nor sinners, because of it, unless it be covered: this is imported in that it is said to be *covered*.

III. However sinners think it a small matter to add transgression unto sin, and contract more and more guilt daily; yet sin bindeth the poor sinner over to God's curse, and to eternal punishment, seeing they are not able to satisfy God's justice: this is implied, in that it is said *not to be imputed*.

IV. Sin is of such an evil and foul nature, as cannot be sufficiently held forth by one or two expressions, but several must be made use of to set it forth to us, that its loathsomeness, abominableness, and vile nature, may the more appear: therefore in the Hebrew text here cited, there are three expressions used to set it forth. 1. A word that properly denoteth a *defection, or falling off from God, rebellion, yea, malicious rebellion flowing from pride, casting off of God's authority with contempt*. 2. A word signifying to *step aside out of the way, an aberration from the right scope*. 3. A word signifying *pravity, perversity, maliciousness, crookedness*. And in the Greek

there are two, the one signifying *lawlessness, a repugnancy to the law of God; the other, an erring from the right scope*.

V. However sin be a great debt, by reason whereof sinners are in bonds, bound over unto justice; yet there is such a privilege, whereof believers are made partakers, whereby they are set at liberty, and freed from the bonds of sin, and have sin pardoned, and not imputed; for *blest is the man whose iniquities are pardoned, &c.*

VI. Albeit to deserve wrath and damnation be an inseparable adjunct of sin, and sin, where-ever it is, leaveth such a blot as denominates the man a sinner, and it being wrong done to God, it displeaseth him; yet in pardon of sin, tho' the stain and blot wherewith the soul is said to be defiled, Matth. xv. 20. be not removed, yet the actual obligation of the sinner unto punishment is taken off; and thus sin, which before had, as it were, a being, and was living and crying for vengeance, is now removed, pardoned, and taken out of the way: thus sin is said to be *pardoned*.

VII. In pardon of sin, altho' it be not so wholly removed, as no reliëts of corruption should remain, for corruption still cleaveth to us, and is properly sin; nor so covered or removed, as that God should not be angry with, nor punish the persons, seeing such have been punished, even tho' pardoned, as, 2 Sam. xii. 14. Psalm xcix. 8. nor so covered as if his omniscience could not reach it, or there were any thing interposed betwixt his eyes and sin; yet it is so far covered, as that God (however it be filthy and abominable in itself, provoking God to execute vengeance) will not so take notice of it, as to punish the guilty person with eternal wrath and destruction: thus sin is here said to be *covered*.

VIII. However a believer may be vexed with the thoughts of sin, even after it is pardoned, and conscience may terrify him, and God's dispensations may put the man to cry *Pardon, pardon*, even after pardon

pardon is granted; yet when God pardoneth sin, he perfectly and completely pardoneth it, as to actual obligation to punishment and wrath eternal, so that it cannot be more perfectly pardoned; it is totally and irrevocably pardoned; yea, so fully pardoned, as if it had never been, and so as God doth no more look upon him as a sinner, sin being now utterly abolished, as to any actual obligation to condemnation: hence sin is said to be *blotted out, subdued, casten into the sea, &c.* Micah vii. 19. so Isa. xlv. 27. and xxxviii. 17. Psal. xiii. 12. For here there are several expressions used to set it forth, as if one were not sufficient, it is *pardoned, covered, and not imputed.*

IX. Albeit there be some qualifications required of us before pardon, as faith and repentance, yet pardon is no act of ours, but God's act allenarly; he only it is against whom the injury is done, and he only it is unto whom this belongeth, as an incommunicable property, Isa. xliii. 1. Exod. xxxiv. 7. he only absolveth the sinner absolutely, and satisfyingly intimateth the same to the conscience: therefore it is said, *unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin.*

X. Tho' it be too ordinary with poor deluded souls under temptation, to cry out, their sins are greater than can be forgiven; yet it is a groundless conclusion, for there is no sin (save that against the Holy Ghost) but it may be pardoned; and let a soul's sins be never so gross and numerous, if he flee in to Christ there is pardon for him; for *sins are pardoned, transgressions are covered, and iniquities not imputed:* Sins, transgressions and iniquities, and all indefinitely, and all without exception, are pardoned. See Isa. i. 18. Exod. xxxiv. 7. Psalm lxy. 2.

XI. Altho' pardon supposeth a man to be guilty in himself, so that as he is pardoned he cannot be said to be justified; yet justification is such an act of God wherein he pardoneth all our sins, whether pardon be the form or effect, or integral part of justification, yet this is sure, that in this act of

justification pardon is granted; for the blessedness of the justified man is thus made out, that *blessed is the man whose sins are pardoned, covered, and not imputed.*

XII. Beside this pardon of sin which is granted in justification, there is also an imputation of righteousness, so that pardon doth not exhaust the whole nature of justification; for without righteousness imputed, at least, no man can be called or accounted righteous, (and remission of sins properly gives no righteousness) and so no man could have eternal life, unless the law had been fulfilled; and therefore Christ was put to do it, Rom. viii. 3. Gal. iv. 4. as our cautioner: therefore says the apostle, *Unto whom God imputeth righteousness,* meaning the justified man, of whom he is speaking.

XIII. This righteousness which is imputed, is no righteousness inherent in us, otherways the reward should be of debt; but it is the righteousness of another, even Christ, in whom we are *made the righteousness of God,* and to whom our sins were imputed, 2 Cor. v. 21. in whom we are *accepted,* Eph. i. 6. and hence is this righteousness oftentimes called *the righteousness of God,* Rom. i. 17. and x. 3. Phil. iii. 6. as being the righteousness of Christ, who was God: for this *righteousness* is said to be *imputed without works.*

XIV. Tho' it be not true that Christ's righteousness is so imputed to us, as if it were formally ours, that thereby we could be said to be as righteous as Christ; yet this imputation of righteousness is no chimaera, or groundless imagination, however it seemeth absurd to carnal reason, but a real thing, founded upon the obedience of Christ, which is no fiction; and it is God's goodwill and pleasure to accept of that obedience and suffering of Christ, as if we ourselves had done it: thus this imputation is said to be a deed of God's, and so it must be a real thing; *Unto whom God imputeth righteousness.*

XV. There is no inconvenience that

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justification comprehend both remission of sins and imputation of righteousness, but rather a necessary, in that after the fall man was bound not only to suffer the penalty, by virtue of the threatening, *That day thou eatest thou shalt die*, but also to yield obedience in himself or cautioner, by virtue of that, *Do this and live*; God will no more dispense with the one, which was required primarily, and in itself, than with the other: nor doth remission alone make a man legally righteous, in an universal sense, otherways Christ needed not to have *come in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*, contrary to Rom. viii. 3. Christ did not satisfy for the penalty, that the law should be no longer a law obliging us to obedience; and albeit life and death, taken naturally, be privatively opposed, so that the taking away of the one will effectuate the other, without any farther action; so that if there be not life, in a subject capable, there must be death; as when there is not light there must be darkness; and where there is no crookedness there must be straightness; yet here, being considered morally, they are opposite only by the appointment and will of God; so that albeit, *de facto*, there be not a third, or neutral estate of a man who is neither just nor unjust, neither not just nor guilty, yet they may well be considered as distinct, so as not to be both effectuate by one and the same action; for pardon doth not make a man *to be* no sinner, but to be one not obnoxious to eternal punishment; and from this, right to a heavenly and glorious life doth not flow by a natural resultancy, but only from the free appointment of God; so that not to be a sinner may be considered negatively, as importing only innocence, which was Adam's case before the fall, who was free of sin, and yet not just, so as to have a right to eternal life, for this he was not to have till he had persevered in perfect obedience. Yea, these two are so far from excluding other from justifica-

tion, as if they were incompatible, that they rather so agree as to infer each other, and the being of the one in justification will infer the other; for the apostle infereth, that righteousness is imputed because remission of sins is granted; not as if they were one and the same, or equipollent, but because of their necessary combination and inseparable connection, which may sufficiently ground a rational inference; as we may say, a man is justified, therefore he is sanctified, though they be distinct, yet inseparable; so tho' imputation of righteousness and remission of sin be distinct, as the righteousness imputed and the sin pardoned are not the same, tho' one infereth the other: therefore says the apostle, *Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness,---saying, blessed is the man whose iniquities are pardoned.*

XVI. Man being now by nature an heir of hell, lying under God's curse and vengeance, unable to help himself, there is no way for him to win to blessedness but by getting his iniquities pardoned, and righteousness imputed; and whoever have these favours may rest assured that they shall inherit everlasting blessedness, for in a manner they carry heaven about with them; so that however, for their exercise and humiliation, God's face may be hid from them, and they in their own apprehension, appear lost and undone, and may sometimes meet with fatherly chastisements for their transgressions, this being a mercy covenanted, among the rest, Psalm lxxxix. 31. 32. yet a justified state is a blessed state, and a justified man hath blessedness; for Paul maketh mention of *the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness*, and David says, *Blessed is the man whose sins are pardoned, &c.*

XVII. Albeit there be no pardon of iniquities but in and through Jesus Christ, who by the sacrifice of himself hath satisfied justice; yet seeing we contribute nothing

thing to this satisfaction, remission of sins being free as to us, clearly evinceth, that justification is not by works, but by faith in Jesus Christ; for the apostle proveth, that *righteousness is imputed without works*, because of remission, and non-imputation of sins.

VERSES 9. 10. *Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say, that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.*

How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

FOR the farther clearing of this argument, brought from the instance of Abraham, he proposeth an objection, and then answereth it at large. The Romans, to whom the apostle was writing, might have said, You have proposed the example of Abraham, and shown how he was justified by faith, but what is that to us? Abraham was one who was circumcised, and the father only of the circumcised Jews; and so tho' his justification will say something to the Jews, who are his children, yet it will say little to us who are uncircumcised Gentiles. Thus then the objection runneth: *Cometh this blessedness of justification and pardon, on the circumcision, that is, the circumcised Jews, or uncircumcision also, that is, the Gentiles?* We grant that faith was counted to Abraham for righteousness, but when? was it counted to him before he was circumcised, or after? He answereth, It was reckoned *not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision*; even about fourteen or fifteen years before he was circumcised, for it was said of him, that his faith was imputed unto *righteousness*, Gen. xv. 6. before that Ishmael was conceived, Gen. xvi. 4. and when Ishmael was born Abraham was fourscore and six years old, Gen. xvi. 16. but when he was

circumcised he was ninety and nine years old, Gen. xvii. 24.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. That examples may be useful for clearing and confirming of truth satisfactorily to the consciences of hearers, they ought to be pertinently and fitly applied, as Paul doth this example of Abraham, shewing how it serveth to confirm both Jews and Gentiles, touching justification by faith.

II. Blessedness, thro' free justification, and remission of sins, is not a privilege due to the Jews only, however in respect of external privileges they had the pre-eminence, but which both Jews and Gentiles partake of thro' faith; for this *blessedness cometh not on the circumcision only, but on the uncircumcision also*.

III. Scripture chronology, whereby we know at what period of time things fell out, is useful and necessary, and when well improved will serve to clear useful truths, and help us to the better uptaking and understanding of God's mind in several particulars; as here, the very computation of the time when it was said, that Abraham's faith was imputed unto righteousness, and the taking notice how this came to pass before that he was circumcised, is found useful to clear how Abraham's instance may be of use even to the Gentiles. See Gal. iii. 17.

IV. Albeit the sacraments be necessary with such a necessity as floweth from a precept, so as to slight them, or contemn them, is a grievous guilt; yet are they not absolutely necessary unto salvation, so as the want of them is damnable; for faith was imputed to Abraham *in uncircumcision*, and so he was into a state of justification before the sacrament was applied.

VERSES 11. 12. *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being*

uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

And the father of circumcision to them who are not of circumcision only, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.

THAT this may be yet clearer, he pre-occupies two or three more objections, or answereth some questions, which might be proposed; as, 1. Then this blessedness should come only upon the uncircumcised, seeing faith was imputed to him unto righteousness while uncircumcised. He answereth, No. And why? *because he received the sign of circumcision; that is, circumcision which was a holy sign, according to God's appointment and institution; for receiving presupposeth giving.* But then it might be said, 2. To what purpose was he circumcised? what use was there of circumcision to him who was justified before? He answers, That it might be *a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised.* There being a covenant betwixt God and him, in which there were several spiritual blessings promised, as, *that God will be his God, and the God of his seed, and that, in his seed all the nations should be blessed,* and the like; and so there was a righteousness held forth by which he should be justified, which he was to lay hold on by faith, and therefore called, *the righteousness of faith:* therefore, that his faith might be strengthened, and that he might not stagger, thro' unbelief, at the promise, the Lord appoints this visible sign, to be a seal to ratify and confirm the promise, as a broad seal set to a charter that it may have more faith and force, as the word is used, 1 Cor. ix. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 9. Rev. vii. 2. 4. 2 Cor. i. 22. So that here we have a definition of circumcision, yea, and of every sacrament in general: It is a sign appointed of God

to be a seal of the righteousness of faith. But it might be said, 3. What meant all this, that he, being justified while uncircumcised, should receive circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of faith? He answereth, *That he might become a father both to Jews and Gentiles, that faith, or righteousness by faith, might be imputed to both; to those that are not circumcised, no less than to those who are circumcised, providing they believe, and walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised; that is, that he might be the first spring of conveyance of this covenant, with the blessings covenanted, unto his followers, and sub-confederates; so that as parents transfer rights to inheritances unto their children, and what right their children have to these inheritances is in and thro' their parents, so he, as a father, should transfer a right to these covenanted blessings, both by his doctrine and example, and their title to the covenant should be in him; and that unto his seed, or children, that is, such as receive this covenant externally only, as many of his carnal seed did, or internally also; so that he is a father to all those who profess faith in Christ, and so walk in the steps of that doctrine which Abraham believed and professed, and therein was a father to them by example, in casting them a copy, tho' they believed not sincerely and savingly; so that such have a fundamental right to all the ordinances which are bestowed upon external covenanters: and to those who come up to the terms of the covenant, and believe savingly, as Abraham did, who have a right also unto the saving blessings bestowed on internal covenanters, such as *the righteousness of faith imputed:* and of these, I think, he is mainly speaking here, (no way excluding the other, so as that the apostle thought there were none externally only, the seed of Abraham, and in covenant with God, for he has clearly asserted the contrary, Rom. ii. 28. 29. and*

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through this is the other of internal covenanting drawn, as a hidden vein) because he is speaking of justification, and shewing, by Abraham's instance, how that it is by faith, and that there is a righteousness imputed, and how his instance is conclusive, in that he is the father of all believers, and so all must be justified as he was justified, be they Jew, be they Gentile.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Albeit we find not the word *sacrament* in the scripture, and so can make no use of the name, to clear or point forth any thing of the nature of that which now goes under that name; yet among other ordinances which God hath set up in his church, this which is commonly signified by the word *sacrament* is one, whereby he would confirm his promises, made upon such or such conditions; for such an ordinance was *circumcision*, a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith.

II. These sacraments are instituted and appointed to be signs, and so are sensible, falling under the senses, particularly of sight, having some aptness to point forth something invisible by proportion, whereby the covenanted people are differenced from others, who have not that badge, (hence the Jews are often signified by circumcision, and so called, as thereby differenced from all others) and united among themselves, 1 Cor. x. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. and such signs as still point out our duty, Rom. vi. 4. and layeth on engagements on people, being sometimes such signs as call to mind former received mercies, Exod. xii. 26. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 24. 26. Matth. xxvi. 26. Luke xxii. 29. Mark xiv. 20. Thus, here, circumcision is called a sign; the cutting off of the fore-skin of the flesh was a visible sign, having some resemblance with what it did represent.

III. However there be such a strait union betwixt the sign in the sacrament and the thing thereby represented, as

that they become, in some manner, proportionably one; whence it is that the sign getteth the name of the thing signified, Matth. xxvi. 26. 27. Gen. xvii. 9. 10. 11. Acts vii. 7. 8. Exod. xii. 11. 21. Matth. xxvi. 28. and the thing signified the name of the sign, 1 Cor. v. 7. Col. ii. 11. 12. yet they remain really distinct, and cannot be properly the same; for sacraments are signs, and so must be really distinct from the thing which they signify and represent, for nothing can be a sign of itself.

IV. Sacraments being a piece of God's worship, the prescribing whereof belongs to God only, Exod. xx. 5. must only have their institution and appointment of God; so as no man may lawfully invent any new sacrament, nor add any sacramental rite unto what God hath appointed, without the guilt of will-worship and superstition: therefore it is said. *Abraham received circumcision*, and so it was none of his own invention, but an ordinance that had God for its author, who only was the author of the covenant whereof it was a seal: See Gen. xvii. 10. Exod. xii. Matth. xxviii. 19. and xxvi. 26. 1 Cor. xi.

V. Tho' the sacraments be not absolutely necessary unto salvation, so as there should be no salvation to such as want them, seeing children, under the law, were not to be circumcised until the eighth day, before which day many might have died, and some did die; yet it is not in man's power to use them or not, as he thinks fit, but they must be received in the order, and manner which God has appointed. None of God's institutions ought to be neglected, nor his commands disobeyed, Exod. iv. 24. Gen. xvii. 14. Numb. ix. 13. nor his gifts or privileges slighted: Now, this is an ordinance instituted, as we shewed in the last Observation, and commanded, Gen. xvii. 10. Exod. xii. 3. Lev. xxiii. 4. Acts xxii. 16. 1 Cor. xi. 24. 25. Luke xxii. 19. so is it a privilege granted. Hence Abraham is said to have received circumcision. God commanded, and he obeyed presently, Gen. xvii. 23.

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VI. Sacraments, depending upon the relation betwixt the sign and the thing signified, hold forth no benefit, but in so far as they are used and applied; their institution prescribing application, sheweth, that their being consists in use, and that unless they be used and applied, they are fruitless: *Abraham received the sign of circumcision, and then it was a seal of the righteousness of faith.*

VII. Howbeit there be an infinite distance betwixt the Creator and the reasonable creature, so as there can be no equality betwixt them, and man be bound as a creature to obey his Maker, though God should never indent with him, and bind himself to reward his obedience; yet it hath seemed good in the Lord's eyes, whose goodness is unsearchable, to condescend so far as to enter into a formal covenant with man, and deal with him by way of promise and restipulation, the more to engage man to obedience, and to rational obedience, out of love, when he sees what he is bound to, and what advantage he will get by his obedience: so here God entered into covenant with Abraham, and promised righteousness, &c. and Abraham was to believe and obey; for *seals* do always presuppose a *covenant* or *bargain*, they being added for confirmation: see Gen. xvii Deut. xxvi. 17. 8. 19. Hos. ii. 19. 20. and hence the sins of his people are often called, breaches of covenant.

VIII. The sacraments, being appointed for the confirmation of this mutual covenant, belong only to such as are in covenant; and their being in covenant only gives them a fundamental right to the sacraments; for Abraham was first in covenant, and then *received the sign of circumcision*, and thus it was a *seal of the righteousness of faith*: Hence his posterity who were received into covenant, were called the *CIRCUMCISION*; and in the New Testament such as believed, and so entered covenant, were baptized immediately, Acts

ii. 41. viii. 12. 13. 38. ix. 18. x. 48. xvi. 15. 33. and xviii. 8.

IX. Albeit God's covenant, and promises therein, be firm, complete and valid, and altogether sure, being uttered by the God of truth, who cannot lie, and his alone word might be enough for us to rest on, being surer than heaven and earth; yet it hath pleased the good and gracious God, so far to condescend to our low capacity, as not only to make use of carnal and sensible creatures, suitable to our natures, to help our weak understandings the better to take up spiritual things, as Christ used homely similitudes and parables, John iii. 5. 8. Mark iv. 33. Hos. xii. 10. but also to make use of outward seals to confirm and strengthen our faith, *that we might have strong consolation*, Heb vi. 18. for *circumcision was both a sign and seal*, and for this end appointed of God.

X. As sacraments do represent and signify, by some external sign, something that is spiritual; so do they serve as seals to confirm the covenant, and to ratify the promises thereof, not in themselves, as if they were not true and sure before, but unto us who are ready to question the truth of them, and to stagger through unbelief, and so they are as earnest of a bargain, seals and earnest being one, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13. 14. so circumcision is here called a *seal*; and are not bare, void and ineffectual signs, but such as exhibit grace, and seal and confirm the covenant.

XI. Sacraments are not physical, efficient causes of grace, principal nor instrumental, nor do they effectuate and produce grace and holiness by any inherent quality or power in them, or by God's elevating them for the production of such an effect, but all that they work is only by way of sign and seal; and no inward graces do they confer, but what an outward sign or seal is apt to confer, viz. by working upon the understanding and faith of the receiver, for nothing that is material can produce

any spiritual effect; they are here only said to be *signs and seals of the righteousness of faith*, and of that faith too which Abraham had, yet being uncircumcised, and so he had grace before he was circumcised.

XII. Altho' in that covenant which God made with Abraham, there were some temporal promises added, as protection, multiplication of his issue, honour and riches, and the land of Canaan, which were largely bestowed upon his natural seed; yet it was a pure gospel-covenant, these temporal blessings notwithstanding, seeing even in new testament days, there are promises of temporal blessings, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Psal. xxxvii. 3. Ephes. vi. 8. the most eminent promises, (which are the marrow and substance of all, and ought to give the denomination unto the covenant,) being spiritual, as Gen. xii. 2. 3. and xvii. 1. and these other only appendices: See Heb. xi. 6. where the apostle disputes the matter; for here the apostle says, that the *righteousness of faith* was sealed by circumcision; and so if that which the sacrament sealed be spiritual, the covenant must be spiritual; but that which here was sealed is said to be the righteousness of faith, that is, the righteousness of Christ, which faith lays hold on for justification.

XIII. Man being now fallen into a sinful and miserable estate, and unable to rid himself out of that condition, and the covenant of grace being a covenant entered into, to deliver him out of that estate of sin and misery, the main promise of this covenant is the righteousness of faith, or that righteousness of Christ by which we must be justified before God, and which faith alone lays hold on, and applieth, and that no less under the Old Testament than under the New; for circumcision was a *seal of the righteousness of faith*, and so it was a main blessing promised in the covenant, for here it is put for the whole covenant.

XIV. So that Christ Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, is the head upon

whom, this covenant made with Abraham was settled; he was the purchaser and treasurer of all the good things in the covenant; for it is his righteousness which is here sealed, as the marrow of the whole covenant, called *the righteousness of faith*, to difference it from our own righteousness, Rom. x. 3. Phil. iii. 18. and because it is only applied by faith, Phil. iii. 9. Heb. xi. 7. being in itself *the righteousness of God*, Rom. x. 3. Phil. iii. 9. and hence is he called *our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30..

XV. The sacraments of the New Covenant, as they exhibit and represent Christ, who only is the Mediator thereof; so do they oblige and seal his righteousness promised and held forth in the covenant, without whom there is no salvation, Heb. v. 9. Acts iv. 12. nor pardon of sin, 1 John i. 7. Now sacraments are for pardon and salvation, 1 Pet. iii. 20. 21. Col. ii. 11. 12. 13. Rom. vi. 4. not that every one who partake of the sacrament, do certainly partake of the righteousness of Christ, for the sacraments do not seal absolutely so, but only such who believe in him, and so perform the condition; and to such the sacrament makes sure and sealeth the promise: *Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith*.

XVI. Tho' the sacraments under the law did differ from these under the gospel in several circumstances, as in their outward signs, external rites, and time of duration; as also, in that those under the law were more painful and costly, and hence called *a yoke*, Acts xv. 10. and in several other circumstances, yet are they one and the same for substance, seeing they seal the same covenant, the same gospel-promises, Gal. iii. 8. Heb. iv. 2. and were given to children of the same father, Rom. ix. 4. and to subjects of the same kingdom, Mat. viii. 11. for here *circumcision* is defined to be a *seal of the righteousness of faith*, which is a promise purely evangelical, Rom. iii. 22. 30. and x. 4. Phil. iii. 9. and hence we hear of *circumcision*

cision of the heart, Jer. iv. 4. Deut. x. 16. and xxx. 6. Ezek. xliv. 9. which says it looked to promises spiritual, and so is not a carnal badge, nor yet a type which shadowed forth ours under the gospel.

XVII. This covenanted righteousness, which is the prime promise of the new covenant, is applied by faith; this is the way how it is appropriate and made ours, for it is neither wrought by us, nor inherent in us, and so it must be made over to us, and faith is only that which gives us a title to, and interest in it; and as the righteousness by which all are justified, is the same, both under the law, and under the gospel, being the righteousness of Christ, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*; so the way of applying this righteousness is the same under both testaments, viz. *faith*; therefore this righteousness sealed, is called *the righteousness of faith*.

XVIII. Hence we have a complete definition of a sacrament, viz. That it is a "holy sign, instituted of God, whereby Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied unto believers." See Gen. xvii. 7. 10. Exod. xii. 1 Cor. xi. 13. 26. Matth. xxvi. 26. 27. 28.

XIX. Howbeit in respect of priority of receiving this sign and seal, there is something peculiar to Abraham; who is made the father, the first with whom God covenanted, as head of the family, seeing all could not be first; yet circumcision was not an individual seal of Abraham's individual faith; but seeing father and child are comprehended in the same covenant, Abraham and his seed, who are also hence called *fathers*, Luke i. 72. 1 Cor. x. 1. and so having interest in Christ, and right to the kingdom of heaven, circumcision must be an universal seal of faith; therefore is he called *father*, and otherways he should cross his own intention, which is to prove justification to be by faith, and for this cause bringeth in the instance of Abraham, which would be a mere inconsequence;

if this were looked on as proper and peculiar to him alone, it would prove nothing as to others.

XX. This covenant which God entered into with Abraham, was not made with Abraham as a natural father, nor with his issue as his natural children, otherways all natural parents and children should be in covenant; but as a believing head, not only of children, but also of servants and strangers; and so as accepting of God's call for him and his that profess the faith: for it is said, *that he might be the father of all them that believe*.

XXI. The privileges of ordinances descends to posterity, by virtue of a covenant, and fathers and children are comprehended in the same covenant, so long as they do not openly renounce the same; otherways there should be no grounded hope of their salvation, if they were without the covenant when their fathers were in it; for Abraham is here called *a father*, as in covenant; yea, he entered into covenant, or *received the seal*, that he might be a father, which could not be if his successors were not in covenant with him, and so his children as in covenant; hence God owned their children as his, Lev. xxv. 39. 40. 41. 42. Ezek. xvi. 20. 21. Psalm cxvi. 16.

XXII. The natural issue of Abraham, by Isaac and Jacob, were taken into covenant with himself, and therefore, verse 12, he is called *the father of circumcision*; and as he was a father unto them, even as in covenant with God; so they received the seal of the covenant, and were circumcised, and hence called *the circumcision*; and so of necessity they behoved to be in covenant; for to whomsoever God gives the seal, these are in covenant, and hence God owns them as his, Exod. xx. 2. Deut. v. 6. and xiv. 1. 2. and thereupon they ground their suits often, Deut. ix. 26. 27. Isa. liv. 9.

XXIII. All that seriously profess faith in Jesus Christ are comprehended in the same

same covenant which God made with Abraham, tho' they be not lineally descended from him; for he is *the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised*; even Gentiles must reckon kindred to Abraham, as his seed, viz. by promise.

XXIV. Being externally in covenant with God, though it entitles to external privileges and ordinances belonging to covenanters, as to the seals, Acts ii. 38. 39. and giveth a remote right unto salvation, that is, salvation offered unto them upon terms, and so salvation is of such, John i. 22. yet such have not a real and near right unto the spiritual mercies and blessings of the covenant, until they perform the conditions required, and believe savingly, and so walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham; for righteousness is not imputed but to such as believe, and walk up to Abraham's faith, *which he had yet being uncircumcised*; so that external privileges, and the enjoyment of ordinances will not serve the turn, for they must not only *be of the circumcision, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, &c.*

XXV. As the righteousness by which believers are justified is a righteousness imputed, and so none of their own; so it is one and the same righteousness by which Abraham and all believers, circumcised or uncircumcised, are justified before God: and that this righteousness shall be imputed to all that believe, is made sure in that covenant made with Abraham; therefore it is said, *that righteousness might be imputed to them also.*

XXVI. That faith itself, as our act, is not counted to us for our righteousness, and that faith is not to be taken properly, when it was said to be *counted for righteousness*, verses 3. 5. is clear from thence, that the apostle's argument says, that that which was imputed to Abraham was the righteousness of another; for instead of saying, that *faith may be imputed to them*, he says, that *righteousness may be imputed.*

VERSES 13. 14. 15. *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.

Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

THIS is brought to prove what the apostle said last, touching Abraham's spiritual seed, viz. that in respect of mercies of special note, saving and spiritual mercies, he was a father only to such as walked in the steps of his faith; and hereby also is farther confirmed, that Abraham was justified by faith. His argument may be thus taken up: If the promise which was made to Abraham, was made upon the consideration only of the righteousness of Christ, laid hold on by faith, then it doth only belong to his spiritual seed, or such as believe: the reason is, because, as the promise was made to the father, so must it be to the children; so that if it was made to the father, through faith laying hold on another's righteousness, it must be so made out to the children: But so it is that the promise, *that he should be the heir of the world, was made to him thro' the righteousness of faith.* And that hereby he might clear how Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works, he amplifies this by adding, *Not through the law.* This promise, that *he should be the heir of the world*, is not to be found in exprefs terms amongst all those promises which we find have been made to Abraham, and therefore some take it for one promise, some for another, and thus it is diversly interpreted; but this I think certain, it must be such a promise as agreeth not to Abraham alone, but to all his believing seed; for it is added, in this verse 13. *or to his seed*; and particularly it is said, verse

verse 16. that *the promise* (that is, the same promise mentioned here, as the third of the dispute will evince) *might be sure to all the seed*; and therefore we think it most safe to take the meaning to be this: That under this all the promises made to Abraham are comprehended, so that the world must be taken for all the promises, for this life, and for the life to come; for this world, and for the world to come: and so under this is comprehended God's blessing of him, promise of protection, of being his *exceeding great reward*; Gen. xii. 2. 3. and xv. 1. 5. and of being his God, Gen. xvii. 7. and that he would give him all the land of Canaan, which was an earnest of heaven, and rest above; and so it takes in both grace and glory, both the promises for this life, and that which is to come. All which he knits together in one bundle, because they come all one way unto his own, *viz.* through Christ; even those things touching this life, and what concerneth grace, is so linked to glory, as it is begun glory, and glory is but grace perfected; so that who has the promise of grace and glory are heirs of all the world; for what is more needful in all the world? Now, then, this comprehensive promise, or all the promises, concerning a believer's well-being here or hereafter, *are not made thro' the law*; that is, neither Abraham nor his seed have such ample promises made them, because of their own righteousness, or obedience to the law, or any thing they do: or can do, but *thro' the righteousness of faith*, that is, thro' the righteousness which faith apprehendeth.

That *those promises are not through the law*, he confirmeth in the following verse, (which also proveth the way of Abraham's justification) in that, 1. then faith should be void; for, says he, *if they that are of the law be heirs, faith is made void*; that is, If any attain to be heirs, of the promises, and of the good things promised, by the law, or his thinking to keep the law, then faith serves for no use; for

faith goes out of a man, and seeks righteousness in another. And 2. *The promise should be of no effect*; that is, the promise should not be a promise; but a debt; for what is procured by works is debt, and not promised of mere free grace. 3. Because *the law works wrath*; it sentenceth all, and pronounceth God's vengeance upon all, without exception; and so no-body can procure any thing at God's hands, but wrath; by trusting to it. All are obnoxious to the curse of God by nature, and the law helps this on further; And why so? Because, *where there is no law, there is no transgression*; and so where there is law, there is transgression, and that because of the corruption of our natures, that cannot obey the law; and so the law worketh wrath.

Moreover our understanding that promise, that *he should be the heir of the world* thus comprehensively, seemeth not a little to receive confirmation and clearness from a parallel place, *viz.* Gal. iii. 16. 17. 18. where the apostle is clearing the doctrine of justification by faith, and shewing that the law that came so many years after, could not annul that covenant which God made with Abraham: where we may consider these particulars for clearing of this. 1. This covenant made with Abraham is called *a promise*; so here it is called so likewise. 2. As it is called a promise, so it is called *promises*, in the plural number, verse 16. to shew that it is a comprehensive promise; and so takes in many. And 3. it is called *an inheritance*, verse 18. as here he is called *the heir*.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The covenant which God made with Abraham was a covenant of free grace, containing free and gracious promises; therefore it is said, *for the promise to Abraham or his seed*; and the word rendered *promise*, signifieth *a free promise*, a promise of free grace: See Gal. iii. 16.

II. This

II. This covenant, being a covenant of free grace, contained all things necessary for a believer's well-being here or hereafter; it had *the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8.: for it is called the promise, that he should be *the heir of the world, viz. this world and the world to come*.

III. By virtue of the covenant of grace, believers in Christ, the true heirs of Abraham, have just right and title unto all the promises touching this life, even the temporal things thereof, in so far as may serve for God's glory, and the promoting of their spiritual and saving interest, so as *all things are theirs*, 1 Cor. iii. 22. 23.; and are heirs of all the spiritual mercies, as justification, adoption, sanctification, and at length, of glorification: for *the promise is to Abraham and his seed, that they shall be heirs of the world*.

IV. These promises held forth in the covenant of grace, were not made upon the consideration of works, as being thereby procured and purchased, or of obedience done to the law of God; and in particular, they were not granted to Abraham's posterity, because of obedience done to the ceremonial law, and so did not belong to them alienarily: for *the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or his seed through the law*.

V. The only meritorious cause of all the rich blessings promised and held forth in the covenant of grace, is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who only is the mediator of this new covenant: for *the promise was through the righteousness of faith*.

VI. Faith laying hold upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ, is only that which entitles us to all the blessings and benefits of the new covenant; therefore it is called *the righteousness of faith*, to shew that it must be laid hold on by faith, for the effect before mentioned.

VII. Faith in Jesus Christ, and obedience to the law, in point of obtaining right unto the blessings of the new covenant, are diametrically opposite, and utterly inconsistent; so that to expect the privilege of those special blessings, because of obedience to the law, is to quit the righteousness of Christ laid hold on by faith: *for if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void*; for faith goeth quite out of a man, for something to trust to.

VIII. To expect the blessings of the new covenant, in and thro' any thing in ourselves, or done by us in obedience to the law, is to make the reward of debt, and to make the free promise of grace void and null; seeing that whatever is promised freely, cannot be properly merited by any thing done by us: therefore it is added, *and the promise should be of none effect*.

IX. Man by nature being now fallen from the state of grace, is altogether unable to keep the law, or to perform any commanded duty acceptably; so, as to know that there is a law above a man's head, may be ground enough to affirm that there is transgression of the law: This is supposed, in that he says, *the law works wrath*; and clearly held forth, where he says, *where there is no law, there is no transgression*; and so, where there is law, there it is sure, there is transgression.

X. Sin being a transgression of the law of God, 1 John iii. 4. which is holy and just. Rom vii. 12. deserveth God's curse and wrath, here and hereafter, Rom. vi. 23. Matth. xxv. 41. 46.; wherefore *the law is said to work wrath*.

XI. The law of God being holy, just, and good, doth not, nor cannot properly be said to work wrath, but only in respect of us, who cannot observe the same; and so it brings forth to light God's curse against sin: *The law worketh wrath*, only by holding forth God's wrath against transgressors; for *where there is no law, there is no transgression*.

XII. It

XII. It is our ignorance of what the law binds on us, by reaſon of our tranſgreſſion, and of what we may, and ſhould, in juſtice expect from the law, now being tranſgreſſed by us, that makes us truſt ſo much to our own works, and expect ſo much for what we ſuppoſe we do in obedience to the law: and therefore to let them ſee, that they could *not be heirs of the promiſes* by the law, as they thought, he tells, that *the law works wrath*.

VERSES 16. 17. *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that alſo which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him----*

After he has ſet down the concluſion which he has been proving from verſe 13. as following clearly from the former reaſons; ſaying, *Therefore it is of faith*: he confirms it further from theſe reaſons; 1. The inheritance was to be granted thro' *faith* that it might *be of grace*. It was one of God's ſpecial ends, why he purpoſed this way of granting the inheritance; *viz.* that his free grace, and rich good-will might the more clearly ſhine forth; which would be much darkened, if the inheritance had been granted by the law, or for works done by us in obedience to the law. 2. That *the promiſe might be ſure*. If the promiſe had been made only upon the conſideration of our works, it had been moſt changeable and unſure; but God deſigned this way, that the promiſe might not depend on us, frail mutable creatures, but on God, and his free grace, which is ſtill one and the ſame, and cannot alter, for all our ſins and provocations; and that *to the whole ſeed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that alſo which is of the faith of Abraham*; that is, not to the believing Jews only, who are of Abraham's ſeed according to ſtrict law

and nature, being naturally deſcended of him, (and thus, *of the law*, muſt be taken to be the ſame with, *of the circumciſion*, verſe 12. and not as it is taken, verſe 14. ſince then the promiſe ſhould be no ways ſure to ſuch; for it is not made to ſuch as truſt to their works at all,) but alſo to believing Gentiles, who are Abraham's ſpiritual ſeed; not as deſcended naturally of him, as were the Jews, but as ſerving themſelves heirs to him by faith, who had not the law as Abraham's natural poſterity had. So this ſeed of Abraham takes in both Jews and Gentiles who believe; ſpiritual promiſes are ſure to all who believe, tho' they be not Jews; and why ſo? he gives a reaſon thereof in theſe words, *who is the father of us all*; not only the Jews are his ſeed, but even the believing Gentiles, following the ſteps of Abraham's faith, are his ſeed, becauſe he is the father of all theſe. *Before God whom he believed*; that is, he became a father in a ſpiritual manner, and after a ſpiritual kindred, or in ſuch a way as hath place before God; ſo that he was not father in a carnal manner; nor promiſed to be a father ſo much that way, even to the Jews, but rather by promiſe, beyond nature, as is clear afterward, and gripped to by faith. The Lord ſaid to him, now ſtricken in years, his wife Sarah's womb being dead, that he ſhould be the father of many nations; and this promiſe he believed againſt hope, and ſo, after this ſpiritual manner, which is only in account before God, he became a father of many nations: and for this cauſe he cites the words of the promiſe made to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 5. So then, being a father of his natural iſſue, not ſo much by nature (it being rather againſt nature, that Sarah, being without ordinary ſtrength of nature for conception, ſhould conceive) as by promiſe, Gal. iv. 23. and ſo by faith laying hold on the promiſe, he might no leſs this ſame way, become the father of other nations, according to a divine and ſpiritual fatherhood gained by faith.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. God, in conveying the inheritance of grace and glory unto such as he had chosen, as he intended a demonstration of his own glory, particularly of his rich and wonderful free grace; so did he choose such a course as might most serve for that end: and tho' we could not see occasion why the Lord taketh such a course, rather than another; yet herein should we rest, that it is a way that will most preach forth his free love and rich grace and good-will. And in particular, to expect any spiritual or covenanted mercy, here or hereafter, for any thing we can do, is to raise a mist to darken the glorious face of God's free grace and matchless good-will; and this is to cross the high and sovereign design of God: all which is clear, in that he says, *It (viz. the inheritance) was of, or thro', faith, that it might be by grace.*

II. Faith, carrying a man out of himself, denying all merits in himself, in less or more, and expecting all in and thro' the merits of another, and resting upon these merits as every way sufficient, says, all is free, and all comes from free grace and undeserved love; *it is of faith, that it might be by grace: faith cries down self, and up free grace.*

III. As God is a God of truth, and every way unchangeable, James i. 17. and one *that cannot lie*, Tit. i. 2. Heb. vi. 18. so is he serious and ingenuous in all his dealings with the children of men; his words are all true, and his promises firm and sure, standing upon a sure foundation, *that the promise might be sure: therefore he chose that the way of conveyance of the inheritance should be by faith.*

IV. As we are fickle and changeable, being creatures, (unchangeableness being God's prerogative royal) and most unconstant in any good, our *goodness being as the morning cloud, and as the early dew*, Hos. vi. 4.; so every thing that dependeth upon us, or our doings, must be most uncertain and

unsure; and so, if God's bestowing of spiritual blessings upon us did depend upon us, or any action of ours, they would prove most uncertain, and we would hence gather no ground of confidence: This is supposed, in that he says, *it is of faith, that the promise might be sure.*

V. The benefits of the new covenant being all purchased in and through Jesus Christ the mediator thereof, and nothing being required of us, but to go out of ourselves; and rest upon those merits of his; they are most sure, and so the best way for us to read the firmness of them, when we begin to stagger, considering our own wants and unfitness, is to look to the solid ground, that cannot be shaken, on which they stand, the unchangeable good-will of God, and the rich merits of Jesus Christ: *it is of faith, that the promise might be sure.*

VI. Howbeit, during the Old Testament dispensation, the Lord thought fit to comprize within the church only the natural issue of Abraham, excluding all other nations, except some few proselites, that willingly came in and joined with them; so as to them pertained *the adoption, the glory, and the covenants*, Rom. ix. 4.; and at first the apostles commission reached no further, Matth. x. 5. *the rest being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise*, Eph. ii. 12.: yet believing Gentiles (the new covenant taking in all nations, Acts x. 35. Col. iii. 11. the partition-wall being removed in Christ) are taken in to that same covenant which was made with Abraham, and they are part of his seed no less than if they could claim carnal kindred to him: for we hear here of *the whole seed, not that only which is of the law, but that also which is of faith*; that is, not only Jews, but Gentiles, they are serve heirs to the blessings of Abraham, Gal. iii. 14. being his children, verse 7. they are blessed with him, verse 9.

VII. As profession of the true religion maketh

makes the Gentiles external members of the church, and Abraham's external seed and may suffice to entitle them to the ordinances in God's order, and to the external means of salvation, and other privileges, belonging to the visible church; so that will not be enough to entitle them to saving mercies, and the spiritual blessings of the covenant; but there is such sincere and lively faith required as Abraham had, and thereby they become his spiritual seed; and so they are said to be his seed *of faith*.

VIII. God's promises, all of them flowing from free and undeserved mercy and good-will, and being procured by the merits of Christ, which faith looks out unto, and layeth hold on, do not ebb and flow according to believers external enjoyments, whether they be many or few; but are as sure to such as want many external privileges, providing they have true and lively faith, as to such as have them all: for *the promise is sure to all the seed*, even to that part *which is of faith*, tho' they be not carnally in kindred to Abraham, nor his seed by the law.

IX. Howbeit the covenant of grace was published long before Abraham's days, even shortly after the fall; yet was it never before so promulgated as in the days of Abraham, as for plainness and clearness, the matter being formerly propounded in dark and cloudy terms and expressions; as Gen. iii. 15.; so in this respect, that it was not made with any one single man, as the head of a family, that in and thro' him it might be conveyed unto his issue and seed, and so as his succession should be considered as confederates also with himself: for thus it was made with Abraham, who is therefore called *the father of us all*, and we find none other so called.

X. God did not enter into covenant with Abraham, considered naturally as a natural father, to all his posterity, but as an honest professor, receiving the promise which was made by faith; and so he became a father in his covenant upon a spi-

ritual account; and therefore he is said to be *the father of us all before God*, tho' not in man's account, who call those his children who came naturally of him.

XI. As the Spirit of God, speaking in the scriptures, is the Spirit of truth, and ought to be appealed unto in all controversies, as the final judge, in whose determination we ought to rest; so ought such as hold forth truth to people to confirm all that they deliver from the scriptures: therefore, says Paul, *as it is written*.

XII. As people ought to try the spirits whether they be of God or not, 1 John iv. 1. and to search the scriptures, whether the thing which they hear be consonant thereto or not, John v. 39. Isa. viii. 20. Acts xvii. 11.; so ought they to be so well versed in the scriptures, as that ministers need not cite chapter and verse, but the citing of the very words may be sufficient: for Paul says no more, but *as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations*.

XIII. Whatever improbabilities may seem to lie in the way of the accomplishment of God's promises; yet God being truth itself, and the fountain of all truth, his promises are as sure as if they were accomplished already; for this promise, that *he should be the father of many nations*, is set down in the præter-perfect tense, to shew the certainty thereof; for the Lord says, *I have made thee a father of many nations*.

VERSES 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. --- *Whom he believed, even God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were:*

Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

THAT it may yet be clearer, how Abraham is the father of us all, after he has shewn how it was upon God's part, by virtue of his promise; saying, *that he should be a father of many nations*; he next shews, how it came to pass upon Abraham's part, *viz. by faith*, therefore it is added, *in whom he believed*; and this faith of his is commended from several particulars: 1. In that he fixed his eyes on God's truth and omnipotence, set forth in two particular expressions, suitable to his present case. . God promised, that he should be the father of many nations, and it was a thing altogether unlikely to look to God's ordinary way of nature, and therefore he takes up God as one *that raiseth the dead*; and so can put strength in him to beget, who was as good as dead; and as one which *calleth those things which be not as though they were*, who can give a being to such things as have no being; he can give a being to nations that in all probability shall have no being, and that most easily, with a word. 2. It is commended from the several difficulties that made the accomplishment of the promise seem altogether impossible: and *first* in general; It was *against hope*; all the hope that he would have founded upon carnal reason was gone and become blind: and *secondly* more particularly. (1.) *His own body was now dead*, and so unapt for generation, *being an hundred years old*. It is true, this is not altogether so prodigious a thing, that one of a hundred years should beget children; yet, considering how all his lifetime he was much exercised with labour, troubles and travels, and so near exhausted and spent, it would seem so much the more incredible, especially when he might have considered, how he could not

beget children, when he was young and of a strong body, and so much less now, when his body was almost spent and gone. It is true, he beget children after this upon Keturah, but all that was by virtue of God's blessing, renewing him as the eagle at this time. (2.) *The deadness of Sarah's womb*, who now being about ninety years old, was altogether unfit for conception, according to the ordinary course of nature. 3. It is commended, in that notwithstanding of these difficulties standing in the way of the accomplishment of the promise, yet he stuck to the promise, and hoped for the performance: And (1.) he believed, in hope *that he should become the father of many nations*, and his only ground was the promise of the Almighty, *according to that which was said, so shall thy seed be*, Gen. xv. 5. (2.) *He was not weak in the faith*; these seen difficulties did no ways diminish his faith and confidence, but the more they appeared, the more he firmly believed. (3.) *He considered not his own body, &c.* he would not once consult sense in the matter, nor see what carnal reason would say, he laid no weight on any thing of that kind: it is true, we find him reasoning thus, Gen. xvii. 17. *Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old, and shall Sarah that is ninety years old bear?* and this was the carnal reasoning of sense; but he did not yield unto these reasonings, nor did he speak so thro' unbelief, but rather, as admiring the greatness of the promise; he would not hearken unto the language of sense and reason. (4.) *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief*; he doth not hesitate at the matter, as not knowing whether to believe or not; he is not at an uncertainty or variance with himself, as being sometimes of one mind, sometimes of another; he is not dubious, like one meeting with two ways, not knowing which to take; he staggers not so thro' unbelief. But (5.) *he was strong in the faith*; he set himself stoutly against these objections, and opposed them manfully, and

and gathered courage and ſtrength to himſelf for that effect. (6.) *He gave glory to God; he would not queſtion God's truth for all that could be ſaid, but truſted to his word, and believed his power, and ſo gave glory to God.* (7.) *He was fully perſuaded, that what he had promiſed, he was fully able to perform:* As he believed God's good-will in making the promiſe, and made no queſtion of that, ſo neither did he of his power, but was moſt perſuaded of his power, there being no doubt left.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is beyond the power of any created being to raiſe the dead, whatever witches and forcerers may make blind people believe they do in that kind, as the witch at Endor made Saul believe that ſhe raiſed up Samuel, 1 Sam xxviii: 11. &c. it being alone God's prerogative royal, who is the Lord of life and death; and however his prophets and apoſtles have raiſed the dead, yet it was only in and through him, as Acts iii: 12. For here God is deſcribed by this, that *he raiſeth the dead.*

II. As Jehovah hath all being in and of himſelf, ſo is he the author of being to all other things; ſo that beings, and no beings, are all at his command: *he calleth thoſe things which be not as though they were.*

III. As all perfection is centered in the Lord, and excellencies tranſcendently ſuperabound in him, ſo as there is ſuitable help in him to our neceſſities; ſo faith ſhould go forth, and pitch on theſe excellencies which ſuit our caſe, and take up God under thoſe; as the apoſtle doth here ſhew, how Abraham did; he had a promiſe, and there were many things ſaying it ſhould never be made good, and therefore his faith takes up, and reſts upon God, as able to give a being to all his promiſes, and ſo faſteneth its eye upon his almighty power, as able to bring it about:

he believed in God; that raiſeth the dead, and calleth thoſe things which be not as tho' they were.

IV. As a promiſe may be a promiſe, which will have accompliſhment in God's own time, tho' there be many things intervening which may darken the accompliſhment, and put it out of ſight, ſo as ſenſe and reaſon would ſay, that ſuch a promiſe ſhould never be made good, God thinking it fit to ſuffer a cloud to riſe betwixt the promiſe and the performance, for the farther exerciſe of faith; ſo faith muſt reſolve to have difficulties in its way, and to have carnal hope, founded on ſenſe and reaſon, on its top: for *Abraham believed againſt hope.*

V. Faith, with an eagle's eye, can pierce through the thickeſt cloud of improbabilities, yea, and impoſſibilities to fleſh and blood, and ſee the promiſes taking effect in their own time, when it has a promiſe from the Lord to reſt on: *Abraham believed againſt hope, when he heard it ſaid, ---So ſhall thy ſeed be.*

VI. Tho' ſenſe and carnal reaſon would think faith a fool to look for that which is ſo far from being but probable, that it is altogether improbable; yet faith is no fancy, whatever ignorant men, whoſe minds are altogether carnal, think of it; but it has a ſure ground to reſt on, even the word of promiſe; and ſo Abraham believed that he ſhould be the *father of many nations*, and was no loſer, when it was according to that which was ſaid, *So ſhall thy ſeed be.*

VII. As true faith believeth to be true whatever is revealed, becauſe of the authority of the Lord who ſpeaks, and ſo yieldeth obedience to the commands, and trembles at the threatenings; ſo doth it in a ſpecial manner claſp about the promiſes: Abraham believed according as it was ſaid, *So ſhall thy ſeed be.*

VIII. Albeit faith be ſeldom accompanied with carnal hope, or has it on its ſide; yet being faſtened on a promiſe, it hath

hath a hope with it of another kind; and spiritual hope ariseth from faith settled on the ground of a clear promise; and where hope is not founded on faith gripping a promise, it is but a hope that will vanish; for Abraham *believed in hope*, when his faith was *according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*

IX. Howbeit true and saving faith be one and the same essentially, in all believers, Eph. iv. 5. yet doth it admit of several degrees, though it be *alike precious faith* in all, 2 Pet. i. 1. yet there is some who are *weak in faith*, Matth. vi. 30. viii. 26. xiv. 31. and xvi. 8. Luke xii. 28. like him who cried out, *I believe, help my unbelief*, Mark ix. 24. and some who are strong in the faith, and have won to the assurance of faith, Heb. x. 22. God distributing the measure of faith as he thinketh fit for his own glory: for here Abraham is said to be *strong in faith*; and this supposes that some are weak in it, for he *was not weak in the faith.*

X. Tho' strong faith will not dispel the clouds of difficulties, so as there shall be no contradiction made unto the promise; yet faith will so blow by the mists of difficulties as not to hesitate because of them: yea, the greater, and more insuperable, like the difficulties be that stand in the way of the accomplishment of the promises, the more will faith hereby be evidenced to be strong in wrestling over them: Abraham was strong in the faith, and so *considered not his own body now dead.*

XI. Believers must expect to meet, not with one difficulty in their way of closing with a promise, but to have many mustered up against them, and every one heightening another; and yet must they not loose their grips of the promise, but rather grip it the faster the more difficulties they have to wrestle with: Abraham had not only his own *dead body*, *being an hundred years old* to wrestle with, but also *the deadness of Sarah's womb*, which made the former dif-

ficulty seem the greater, and yet he believed.

XII. Albeit the only wise God hath placed in living creatures a power of generation and conception, and ordinarily hath limited the same to such a period, which seldom is transgressed, except in an extraordinary manner; yet the Lord hath not hereby limited himself, but he may and doth work beyond, and contrary unto this set ordinary way, when he sees it will contribute to his own honour and glory; and so will give a numerous issue to Abraham *when an hundred years old*, and that by *Sarah when she was ninety years of age.*

XIII. Albeit carnal reason will be suggesting plausible grounds, whereupon to scare and dissuade us from closing with the promise, and expect confidently the accomplishment; yet it is not our safest course to be hearkening to the language of sense, in such a stormy and dark day; but our best is to be deaf to all that carnal reasonings would obtrude, and to lay no weight on any thing which sense alledgeth, how plausible soever it be: it is most dangerous to be consulting flesh and blood, which are still biassed, in a gloomy day; it is best to do as Abraham did, who *did not consider his own body now dead,--nor the deadness of Sarah's womb.*

XIV. As unbelief is a most unsetled thing, making people unconstant as the waters of the sea, so as they know not where to stand, but are made to turn with every tide, and sail with every stream; so the best way to be delivered from the anxiety that attends a dubious mind, and the perplexity that still accompanieth uncertainty, is to get faith rooted on the promise: *Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief.*

XV. It serves highly to commend faith, when, however difficulties which appear insuperable, flow in, and rush upon faith, to make it loose its grips of the promise; yet it abides constant, and sticks the closer

by the word of promise; and when the more and the greater the difficulties be, it waxeth more courageous and valiant, and so is far from being beaten off its ground, that it keeps it with greater zeal and valour; for it is spoken to the commendation of Abraham's faith, that *he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was rather the more strong in the faith.*

XVI. Faith, depending singly upon the promise of God, when all things would say, that such a promise should never be accomplished, and hanging upon a bare thread of the promise, when many contrary blasts of temptation, and thorturing dispensations, yea, and reasons, from an established order of nature, are labouring to loose its grips, and shake it loose, tendeth much to shew forth the glory of God's faithfulness and power: and so to quite the promise because sense is not satisfied, and cannot see thro' matters, (which here is wholly blind) nor will not vote with the promise, is a great dishonour done to God, in believing reasonless reason, and blind sense better than God: *Abraham was strong in the faith, giving glory to God.*

XVII. Though poor souls, miscarried through misbelief, and under a temptation, will rather question God's good-will, in their expressions, than his power; yet in very deed most of their misbelief lieth here in questioning his power and ability; so that were this out of question with them, much of their perplexed and staggering condition would be helped: *Abraham was strong in the faith, being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was also able to perform.*

XVIII. It serves much to the commendation of faith, that it has hushed all the murmurings of flesh, and set its foot upon all the arguings of reason; and, having the promise in the chalk of its eye, can, without any farther hesitation, or doubt, persuade itself of God's ability to perform whatever is contained within the circum-

ference of the promise: *Abraham was fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able fully to perform;* and this was no small matter of commendation to him: and so though it would seem but a small business to believe God to be omnipotent, yet in a time of temptation, when sense and carnal reason are busy objecting to the contrary, it is much.

VERSE 22. *And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

After the apostle has been fully clearing the instance of Abraham, in several particulars, before he come, in the following verses, to apply this to the purpose in hand, and to shew, that howsoever Abraham was a singular example in many things, and his faith was so strong as every one cannot reach; yet his example is of singular use, to prove the way of justification of all believers: he seteth down that which was the assumption of the main argument, brought from the testimony of scripture, As Abraham was justified, so are we; this is made good before: But Abraham was justified by faith, or faith was imputed to him for righteousness; this hath been confirmed also, and is here repeated; for the understanding of which much hath been said, upon verses 3. 4. 5. yet because several parties draw it in to favour their own interest, we shall add a little here, and lay down these conclusions.

1. Faith is not said to be imputed to us for righteousness, because it is part of our inherent righteousness, by which we are formally and meritoriously justified; for to say that we are justified by our inherent righteousness, is to cross all that the apostle hath been proving, viz. That we are justified by faith, and not by works.

2. Nor is faith imputed to us for righteousness, as being alone our perfect righteousness, thro' God's gracious acceptance and condescension, instead of the perfect righteousness of the law; and so we should

should be justified by works, not indeed of the law, (which, say they, only is excluded by the apostle) that is to say, by works every way exact and perfect, but by works of grace, esteemed and accepted for a perfected righteousness, through God's gracious condescendency: For, *1st*, This would exclude the merits of Christ Jesus: If faith be our perfect righteousness, we need not Christ's righteousness at all; but this crosseth many of the apostle's arguments here, and destroyeth the merits and satisfaction of his death, contrary to the whole gospel. *2^{dly}*, The apostle excludes all works that stand in opposition to Christ's merits and satisfaction. *3^{dly}*, He excludes all works that make the reward of debt: and faith, in this sense, tho' it be not perfect obedience to the law, but one particular, yet, being so accounted by God thro' his condescendency, and so meriting life, it will make the reward of debt, for such an one would be still a mercenary hireling, be the duty required less or more, as the reward is a due debt to him that wrought one hour, no less than to him that wrought twelve hours. *4^{thly}*, He excludes all righteousness in ourselves, as, Phil. iii. 9. *5^{thly}*, The apostle says we are justified by a righteousness, which is sometimes called, *the righteousness of faith*, verses 11. 13. *a righteousness by faith*, Rom. iii. 22. Phil. iii. 9. and *a righteousness through faith*, Phil. iii. 9. and so this cannot be faith itself, for these expressions shew, that faith is a mean whereby this righteousness is attained, and nothing can be a mean for the attaining of itself.

3. We say, faith cannot be said to be imputed in this sense, that Christ by his merits hath procured of the Father, that in the new covenant faith alone shall be taken as the condition, instead of perfect obedience, which was required as the condition in the covenant of works. For, *1st*, Then faith should be taken as an act, without any respect had to Christ's righteous-

ness as its object, on which it layeth hold, and so we should be justified by our work; so that the apostle should speak amiss in excluding all works, and in opposing faith to works. *2^{dly}*, Then this new covenant should be of the same kind with the old covenant, for works should be the condition of both, only with this difference, that the one should be more easy than the other, and a gradual difference makes not a specific difference. *3^{dly}*, Then the reward should still be of debt, no less than in the old covenant; for, *maius et minus non variant speciem*. *4^{thly}*, And so heaven and happiness should not be immediately procured by Christ, but by our act of faith; as under the old covenant. life would have been the immediate purchase of perfect obedience. *5^{thly}*, Then we should be justified without a perfect righteousness, or else faith should be accounted by God as a perfect righteousness, when it is not; but so we should say, God judgeth of things not as they are, but as they are not, which is a mistaking judgment: for true it is, that faith is not a perfect righteousness, being both imperfect in itself, seeing we all know but in part, and so believe but in part, and may daily cry out, *Lord, help our unbelief*; and only a part of our duty. *6^{thly}*, We no where find it written, that Christ died for this end, that faith should be accepted of God as our complete righteousness, and to put us in part, *in statu quo prius*; that is to say, that having broken the former tack, and so being casten to the door, we should be brought home again, and through his means and moeyen our rent should be eased, and a penny taken for a pound; as if all that Christ did was only the paying of so much for entry, that the yearly rent might be lessened; yea, the contrary of this is every where asserted. *7^{thly}*, Christ and his righteousness is not the object of this faith which is said to be imputed after this manner, (for then faith should not be considered as a work of ours, but as terminating on such an object, and

so should fetch all its vertue from the object, which is truth) but any other thing; and so a dogmatical and historical faith, should be the faith that justifieth; and so devils, and all who have this faith, should be justified; whereas the faith which the apostle speaks of here, is that which looks to Christ crucified, and is called *faith in his blood*, Rom. iii. 25. 8thly, Then Christ's righteousness should not be imputed unto us, nor we said to be clothed therewith; for this faith shall be all our covering, and having it, we shall be accounted perfectly righteous before God: but the apostle, in this business of justification, takes faith in such a sense, as doth no way juggle with the imputed righteousness of Christ, but as rather necessarily presupposeth the same, as being only founded thereupon; so, verse 11. he says, *that righteousness might be imputed*, which is the righteousness of another.

4. We say, *faith* is not said here to be *imputed for righteousness*, as if it were our evangelical righteousness; that is to say, that all that which the apostle meaneth hereby, is only, that faith is the condition of the new covenant, and of justification. I grant, that by faith we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, and so are justified; yet I say, in these words, *faith imputed for*, or unto *righteousness*, righteousness must be taken for Christ's righteousness, and not for our gospel righteousness, (as some are pleased to stile faith, or the condition of the new covenant, as distinct from Christ's righteousness, which they call our legal righteousness) for the reasons mentioned in the exposition of verses 3. 4. And, moreover, because it is added afterward, *to whom it shall be imputed*: What shall be imputed? even the righteousness here mentioned. Now, this cannot be faith, because it is added, *if we believe*, or, *to such as believe*; and how incongruous a speech were it to say, Faith shall be imputed to us if we have faith: and though some

should think this tolerable, yet if we consider how these words are brought in by the apostle, as a limitation of that general assertion, *But unto us also, unto whom it shall be imputed*; least all that hear of this, should challenge an interest in this imputation, he addeth, *It is only to such as believe*, for so runeth the words in the original. Now, if the apostle meant, that it is faith properly taken which is here imputed, what need were there of this limitation? Could the apostle imagine, that any would think that faith should be imputed to them that never had faith? and for this cause should say, that faith is only imputed to such as have faith. So that the thing which is said to be imputed here to righteousness, must be some other thing than faith.

5. And so taking *righteousness* only for Christ's righteousness, we say, it is that which is imputed and made over to believers; and therefore faith, must be taken as connotating its object, where it is said to be imputed; and so the meaning shall be, Christ's merits, laid hold on by faith, is imputed to believers as theirs, and only imputed to them; and faith is the way how this righteousness of Christ's becometh theirs.

This will be further clear, if we consider how this promise, which Abraham is said to have believed, was a promise, for substance, of spiritual things. The promise that *he should be the heir of the world*, and that *he should become the father of many nations*, in the letter, were carnal; yet, for substance and signification, they were spiritual, Heb. vi. 12. 13. 14. 15. and did not concern himself alone, but all believers, who are therefore, Heb. vi. 17. called, the *heirs of promise*: and for their sakes no less, if not more, than for Abraham's; it was, that the *promise was confirmed by oath*, even to *shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel*; and that *we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us*, verses 17. 18. So then seeing

these were spiritual promises, and of common concernment to all the seed; Christ, in whom *all the promises are yea, and amen*, must be looked to in them; they must all speak of him, he being the kernel of them all: and so Abraham believed God, holding forth Christ in these promises, and leaned upon them, or Christ in them, and therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness; that is, Christ, or his merits, rested on, was imputed to him as his righteousness.

All that can be observed on this verse, hath been observed on verses 3. 5. 11. and needeth not to be here repeated.

VERSES 23. 24. 25. *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;*

But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,

Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

IN end, the apostle is applying his whole discourse about Abraham, unto the present purpose, and brings it in as answering an objection: they might say, It speaks little to the point, to bring in Abraham's instance, for he was a man of a strong faith, and so though righteousness was imputed to him, who was such an eminent believer, yet it may be, it shall not be imputed unto us, whose faith is no way so strong: And, might they say, Abraham's faith was of another nature than ours; he had some special promises made to him, and his faith firmly acted on them; now we have not the like, and cannot act faith upon the like; and so his example will be of no use to us. To this he answereth by these particulars: 1. It is true, this truth was set down in scripture, to shew, how acceptable Abraham's faith was to God, and how his faith was imputed unto righteousness; and so it was for his consolation and hope; But 2. that is not all,

there is more use of this truth, *It was not written for his sake alone, 3. but for us also to whom it shall be imputed.* This imputation of righteousness was not peculiar to Abraham, but imputation of righteousness is a benefit that shall have place in the church through all ages, even unto the end; it shall still be a-doing, for the words may be read thus, *To whom it shall come to pass that it shall be imputed.* 4. Yet lest any should lay claim to this righteousness, and expect to have it imputed to them without ground, he addeth a limitation, and sheweth who these are unto whom it shall be imputed, *viz. such as believe on him that raised up Christ.* And so, 5. he points out the object of this justifying faith to be Christ, dying and rising again for us, according to the appointment and good-will of the Father; *who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.* And, 6. he so sets forth this object, as that our faith may be seen not to be of another nature than that faith of Abraham's; he believed in God who raiseth the dead, and we believe on God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. So that here, in few words, we have the sum of the gospel: Christ as our Cautioner and Mediator set forth, 1st, in his humiliation, *he was dead*; a chief part is put for the whole. 2^{dly}, In his exaltation, *he was raised*; a part also is put for the whole. 3^{dly}, In the chief and principal of all this, *God, who both delivered him, and raised him.* 4^{thly}, The procuring cause, it is *for our offences*, or great and grievous transgressions; and the final cause, and so he died that they might be removed. And, 5^{thly}, The end, *for our justification*; that we might be absolved from the sentence of the law, and the curse of God, which was hanging above our heads: Or, he died to expiate our sins, and rose that we might be made righteous; not that either of those can be severed from the other, nor as if his death did contribute nothing to our justification, and his

his resurrection did contribute nothing to the expiation and pardon of our sins; for we find that sometimes our whole redemption is attributed to his death, as Rom. iii. 24. and v. 10. and sometimes to his resurrection, Rom. x. 9. so that the apostle doth not separate or divide these two states of his, as Mediator, but only differenceth them by their proper nearest ends; expiation of sin being the nearest end of his death, and imputation of righteousness the nearest end of his resurrection; and so sheweth, that as we needed both these effects, so he not only died, but became victor; and so procured our pardon and righteousness, and by his resurrection shewed forth that death was overcome, for *the sting of death is sin*, and this sting he hath removed, and by his resurrection applyeth the redemption purchased.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Howbeit upon particular emergent occasions, scripture was committed to write; yet therein may we see the goodness and wisdom of God, consulting our establishment and comfort, against our spiritual enemies, in that his mind was so committed to write, not for that age only, but also for his church in all ages to come, to whom *it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. see 2 Pet. i. 19. Rom. xv. 4. so he says, *it was not written for his sake alone,---but for us also*.

II. Albeit the condition of the church, at the time when the Lord's word was written unto them, and the case of particular persons, upon occasion whereof we find it written, doth not agree to our case, in every particular circumstance; yet the straits and necessities, and spiritual condition of the church in all ages, being for substance the same, the word written will be useful and edifying to us; for that which was *written of Abraham*, whose case in some respect was singular, *was written also for us*. See again, Rom. xv. 4.

III. Whatever special favour or benefit, absolutely necessary, we find bestowed upon believers, in scripture, upon whatsoever particular occasion we find it mentioned, tho' upon an occasion whereof we shall possibly never have the like; yet may we expect the same who have fled in to Christ; for albeit we find it said, that *righteousness was imputed to Abraham* upon a special occasion, yet may believers in all ages expect that *it shall be imputed to them also*.

IV. The imputation of righteousness shall be a benefit which shall have place in the church in all ages, and a benefit which every believer in all time coming may expect, and must have; seeing there is but one door, even Christ, who is *the way, the truth, and the life*, John xiv. 6. for *it shall be imputed to us also*.

V. As it is the same righteousness wherewith believers, first and last, are clothed; so this robe is one and the same way put on, and is imputed upon the same terms unto all to whom it is imputed, *viz.* upon the condition of faith: for *it shall be imputed to us also, if we believe*.

VI. The faith by which we are justified, and have righteousness imputed to us, however it may vent differently in divers persons, upon diverse occasions, and as fetching in something answerable to their particular cases and exigences from the Lord, and so be diversly exercised according to these exigences; yet for substance it is one and the same in all justified persons; for Abraham was justified by faith, and so are we; tho' his faith, as to particular promises, answering his particular case, did otherways vent itself than our faith doth; so as *it was imputed to him* who believed, so is *it to us, if we believe*.

VII. That faith whereby we are justified, doth, in all ages, look out to, and rest upon a Messiah satisfying justice, and acquiring a righteousness, according to the will and appointment of God; and so it carrieth a man quite out of himself, and to look for acceptance in and through an-

other: *it shall be imputed to us, if we believe in him who raised up Christ, &c. otherways not.*

VIII. Faith will be accepted as that upon which righteousness will be imputed, if it look out sincerely and honestly to Christ, and rest on him, dying and rising again, tho' it be not so strong as was in Abraham: tho' we cannot win to a plerophory and full persuasion, yet if we receive and rest on a crucified Cautioner heartily and sincerely, righteousness shall be imputed; faith as sincere, and not as faith in such a measure and degree, is the condition: therefore says the apostle, *it shall be imputed to us also, if we believe on him that raised up Christ*; tho' we cannot win to such a degree as Abraham wan to, yet it shall be imputed to us also.

IX. True and saving faith must look out to Christ, not only as dying and laying down the price of our redemption, but as rising again, and so as fully satisfying justice; and thus the weakest faith believeth that *God quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that be not as though they were*, as Abraham did, *if we believe on him that raised up Christ from the dead.*

X. True and saving faith, as it carrieth a man quite out of himself for righteousness and salvation; so it makes the soul rest upon God's noble device of sending his Son to die, and to roll itself upon him who is sent, as all-sufficient, and to confide on him, and on God through him: *If we believe on him that raised up Christ from the dead.*

XI. That our faith may be established on sure grounds, and kepted from staggering, we should look on God as having a chief hand in this gospel-contrivance, as sending his Son to die, and raising him up again; then shall we not question the Lord's willingness to accept of any that close with this soul-saving design, nor question his accepting of Christ's media-

tion in their behalf: therefore says he, *if we believe on him that raised up Christ.*

From Verse 25th OBSERVE,

I. Man having transgressed the covenant, and so having fallen from his blessed estate of integrity in which he was created, is unable to recover himself, but there is a necessity of another to make satisfaction, and man being unable to seek out such an one who might redeem him, the only gracious God, for the glory of his great name, hath fallen upon the device which man nor angel could never have invented, and therefore has sent his only Son; therefore says he, *who was delivered.*

II. Tho' God neither is nor can be the author of sin, being holiness itself; yet hath he decreed from all eternity, that sin shall exist in the world thro' his permission, and in due time doth he, thro' his actual providence, bring this about; and in particular, he hath foreordained that Christ his only Son should suffer at the hands of wicked men, and should be killed by them, and accordingly in his appointed time, by his over-ruling providence, did bring it about; thus Christ is said to be delivered, both from eternity and in time, *who was delivered.* See Acts ii. 23. and iv. 28.

III. There being a necessity that justice should be satisfied because of our guilt, by reason of the decree, therefore we should look on our iniquities as that for which Christ laid down his life, and as that which nothing would expiate, except the death of Christ; for *he was delivered for our offences.*

IV. Christ by his death did fully satisfy justice for our transgressions, and his death was a sufficient price in God's account for all our iniquities; for *he was delivered for our transgressions.* See Isa. liii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 18.

V. There is no sin, how great soever, but Christ's death is able to expiate the same; for *he was delivered even for transgressions, and that for transgressions indefinitely,*

ſinitely, and ſo for all the ſins of his own people.

VI. Chriſt did lay down his life properly, not that God, notwithstanding of his juſtice, might deal with ſinners upon new covenant terms; but to make ſatisfaction for our tranſgreſſions, who in time believe in him: *he was delivered for our tranſgreſſions.*

VII. As Chriſt did really die, and lay down his life a ranſom for ſin; ſo, having made complete ſatisfaction to juſtice, he roſe again really: *he was raiſed again*

VIII. Tho' Chriſt by his death and other ſufferings, which did precede his death, did make a full and complete ſatisfaction unto the Father, for all the ſins of his own; yet there was a neceſſity of his riſing again, not only becauſe it was impoſſible for him to corrupt in the grave, Pſalm xvi. 10. Acts ii. 31. and xiii. 34. but alſo for our cauſe, that thereby it might be declared, that he had fully ſatisfied juſtice in our behalf, and was now ſent

out of priſon, 1 Cor. xv. 7. and that he might apply the purchaſed redemption unto us in his own time and manner: *he was raiſed for our juſtification.* See Rom. xiv. 9.

IX. Chriſt Jeſus, in all he did and ſuffered, both in his eſtate of humiliation and exaltation, was conſulting our good, and acted all, not for himſelf, but for us; ſo as he was wholly ours, and for us: *he was delivered for our offences, and raiſed for our juſtification.*

X. As this plot of the redemption of loſt man was only the device of the only wiſe God, who is rich in wiſdom and goodneſs; ſo his hand is eminently to be ſeen in every piece of the work, and ſhould be acknowledged accordingly, that we may conceive aright of him in the matter, and read his love which no leſs ſhineth forth, than the love of his Son: for it is ſaid, *he was delivered for our iniquities, and raiſed again for our juſtification, viz. by him on whom we are to believe, that is God.*



CHAPTER V.

IN this chapter, the apoſtle further cleareth the doctrine of juſtification by faith, and thereby confirmeth it the more. He cleareth it, 1. by holding forth ſeveral fruits and effects of juſtification by faith, to verſe 12.: And 2. by comparing Chriſt with Adam, he further illuſtrateth the matter, and ſheweth how all believers partake of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and of life thereby, no leſs, yea much more than we did all partake of ſin and death thro' Adam's tranſgreſſion, to the end of the chapter.

In this firſt point, he 1. enumerates theſe fruits; and 2. confirmeth them from their grounds.

VERSE I. *Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

THE apoſtle here firſt ſets down the theſis, which he hath been confirming hitherto; ſaying, *Therefore being juſtified by faith;* (and thus muſt we read it, and not by putting a diſtinction after *juſtified*, as ſome, who maintain juſtification, from eternity, would have us doing, without any cogent reaſon,) and then ſets down one of the fruits and effects of juſtification, ſaying, *we have peace with God;* that is, being now juſtified thro' faith: that variance which ſin occaſioned betwixt God and man,

man, Isa. lix. 2. whereby God was not only our adversary, but also our terrible avenger, is removed, and there is peace betwixt God and us; and hence flows peace in our consciences, and with the creatures, Isa. xi. and lxxv. John xvi. 33. And 3. he addeth the meritorious cause of all this, *through our Lord Jesus Christ*, who is called *Lord*, as freeing us from justice by his death, and from Satan, death, and the slavery of sin, and so becoming our Lord and ransom; and *Jesus*, as being our Saviour; and *Christ*, as being the anointed Messias, promised of old, and now exhibited. This also serveth to confirm justification by faith thus; That is the only way of justification by which we have peace with God: But so it is, that by justification in and thro' faith, we have peace with God: Therefore, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Justification, as it is a great privilege and favour of itself; so is it the fountain of many more excellent and special mercies, which the Lord bestoweth upon his own; it goeth not alone, but is ever accompanied with many other advantages and favours of special note: so here is mention made of many things flowing from justification, as *peace with God*, &c.

II. As it is much for our edification and consolation, to know the right manner of our justification; so is it also to be well acquainted with the several rivulets that flow from this fountain-mercy: therefore doth the apostle make mention of these here, saying, *being justified by faith, we have peace*, &c.

III. A right view and a serious consideration of the many rich and precious favours that accrue to such as are justified, may abundantly serve to convince such of their folly, who expect to be justified because of their works, and to shew a necessity of trusting to Jesus Christ by faith, and thereby expect justification: for by these fruits of justification, he doth fur-

ther evince, that we are justified by faith; and so says, *being justified by faith, we have peace*, &c.

IV. Justification being an act of God's free grace, which he passeth in his word upon believers, whereby all their iniquities which they stand guilty of are pardoned, Mic. vii. 19. Jer. xxxiii. 8. Ezek. xvi. 63. and they put into a new covenant state; so as they shall never meet with condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. having on the righteousness of Christ, which is perfect and fully bestowed, Jer. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. v. 21. It is an instantaneous act perfected at once; for here, immediately upon justification by faith, followeth friendship with God: and so believers are immediately put into a state of reconciliation and friendship with God; and so, *ex ipso*, that they are justified by faith in Christ, they are able to answer all objections; so that justification is not a thing still in doing.

V. Justification being thus no continued act, but an instantaneous action, perfected in an instant, it is full and adequate to every purpose in this life: so that altho' believers have not all their iniquities which they have not as yet committed, actually pardoned, but will have daily reason to pray for pardon of sin, until the day of death, that they be perfectly sanctified, Heb. xii. 23.; yet they shall never come under the sentence of death for their future sins; and they have them all virtually pardoned, Christ having fully satisfied justice for them; and are sure that they shall all be actually pardoned, because of the promise granted in the new covenant, the pledge of which is actually received: hence we find justification mentioned as a deed done, Rom. iii. 24. 1 Cor. vi. 11. so here it is so full as hath peace with God following thereupon, and several other spiritual favours; *being justified by faith, we have peace*.

VI. Albeit justified persons may fall into gross iniquities, which they may, and must beg pardon of from God, and upon their

their faith and repentance, get actually pardoned, and possibly the pardon intimate to their consciences; yet it is not the act of justification reiterated thereupon, as if either thereby the former pardon granted were null, (for whom God pardoneth, he absolutely pardoneth, not purposing to revoke the same upon any condition, so that he remembereth them no more, &c.) or he were put out of his former justified state, and needed that a new act pass, for instating him of new; for *being once justified, they are at peace with God*, and so once for ay put into a state of reconciliation and friendship; and this state is not alterable.

VII. This justification being an act of God, who is wise, just, and holy, purchased by the righteousness of Christ, and being had by faith, which is a real grace, Heb. xi. 1. is a most real thing, having real effects and fruits flowing therefrom: as here, *peace with God*, which cannot follow upon a chimera, or a *non-ens*, but upon that which is a real efficacious thing: *being justified by faith, we have peace with God*.

VIII. This justification by faith being a real deed (as is shown in the last) it maketh a real change in the believer; not physical, for it doth not abolish the very essence of sin, but moral and legal, in a law sense; not personal, (which change sanctification only makes,) but in our estates, and that before God: for now *being justified by faith, we have peace with God*, which we had not before. See Hos. i. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 10. Ezek. xvi. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 1 Tim. i. 13. Eph. ii. 1. 2. 3. 4. and iv. 20. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 3.

IX. This justification which is here said to be by faith, is not that justification which is in folk's own conscience; but is a real justification before God, because it is such a justification as goeth before peace and reconciliation with God; which may be, where there is no justification in con-

science; *being justified by faith, we have peace*.

X. All mankind since the fall, having lost communion with God, are living in open rebellion against him, and there is nothing but rank enmity and red war betwixt God and them; for until men and women be justified, they are not at peace with God; *being justified, we have peace*. However, at the beginning, man walked in peace, communion, confidence and boldness with God; yet now by sin, this peace is broken up, and there is enmity on our part, against God, Col. i. 20. 21. Rom. v. 10. and vii. 7. and not only so, but also on his part, so as we are under his wrath, John iii. 36. Eph. ii. 3. abominated of him, Psalm xi. 5. 6. our duties rejected, Prov. xv. 8. 9. a sentence lying above our head, Gen. ii. 17. Deut. xxvii. 29. and God engaged to execute the same, being just and righteous, Rom. i. 32. 2 Thes. i. 6. See 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. 20. Eph. ii. 13. 14. 15.

XI. God being of purer eyes than he can behold iniquity, Hab. i. 13. and just and righteous in all his ways, faithful and true in all his sayings, there is no way imaginable how this enmity can be taken away, and peace made up betwixt God and sinners, but by getting their sins pardoned; so long as sin stands up unremoved, there is no peace: for justification must go before reconciliation and peace; *being justified by faith, we have peace*.

XII. Believers being now justified by faith, notwithstanding they were once enemies to God, and God wroth with them, Psalm vii. 11.; yet they are now at peace with God, the feud is removed, and the Lord wholly and thoroughly reconciled and pacified, so that no dispensation they can meet with, how sharp and sad soever it be in itself, shall flow from pure wrath; yea, and this is a lasting peace, that no miscarriage in us shall break up again, Isa. ix. 7. and liv. 10.; for, *being justified by faith, we have peace with God*.

XIII. However there be several sizes of sinners, some greater than others; yet all being alike plunged in enmity, they are alike made partakers of these spiritual privileges, of justification and reconciliation; so as none are more in a justified state than another, (however they may have more sins pardoned, having committed more) nor more reconciled; these are privileges common to all believers, weak ones no less than to Paul himself: therefore says he, *being justified by faith, we have peace with God.*

XIV. Jesus Christ, and he only, is the meritorious cause of our reconciliation, he is the midſ-man, that ſatisfied juſtice, and ſo made peace, turning away God's wrath, and appeaſing him, verſe 10. and turning us from our enmity, Col. i. 21.: See 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. 20. Eph. ii. 13. 14. 15. hence is he called *our peace*, Eph. ii. 14. *We have peace, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

XV. All our beſſings, firſt and laſt, come down to us in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt: and as all our privileges and ſpiritual enjoyments come to us thro' Chriſt's procurement and mediation; ſo ſhould they always be looked on as ſuch, even as fruits of his purchaſe, that every view of them may mind us of Chriſt's love: therefore, as before he told us, we were juſtified through Chriſt, *who died for our ſins, and roſe for our juſtification*, ſo here alſo he tells us, that *we have peace with God through him.*

XVI. There is no privilege or benefit to be had by any in and through Chriſt, till firſt there be an union made up betwixt Chriſt and them; ſo that they have firſt an intereſt in himſelf, before they have a right to any privilege purchaſed by him: *We have peace* (ſays he) *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; he muſt firſt be ours, before we can have peace through him.

XVII. Whoever are made partakers of any privilege in and through Chriſt, to thoſe Chriſt is King and Lord, no leſs than

a Saviour and a Prieſt; therefore ſays he, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

VERSE 2. *By whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

IN the latter end of this verſe, viz. in theſe words, *and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*, there is another fruit of juſtification ſet down, viz. That juſtified perſons have a ſure, well-grounded hope of the heavenly inheritance, and have ſure grounds of expecting a poſſeſſion in glory, and of being made partakers of that glory, which is not yet had, but is to be revealed; and their hope is ſuch as gives them ground of glorying and boaſting: though they endure hardſhip here, yet the very hope of glory which they have, beareth up their heart, and maketh them to rejoice. The firſt part of the verſe may be looked upon either as another fruit flowing from juſtification by faith, and that in Chriſt alſo; and ſo the meaning will be, juſtified ſouls have this further in and thro' Chriſt, that they have free acceſs with boldneſs unto the throne of grace; they have now a door opened, that they may ſtep forward into the chamber of preſence, and approach with confidence unto God, who otherwiſe, without Chriſt, is a conſuming fire; ſin being removed, that made a diſtance betwixt God and them, they may draw near, having Chriſt going before them, as it were maſter-uſher, or as a great courtier, making way for their further enjoying of intimate fellowſhip and cloſe communion with him in all commanded duties, and freedom and liberty in the exerciſe of their graces; as the word ſignifieth, Eph. ii. 18. and iii. 12.

Or rather it may be taken up thus; The apoſtle having ſaid before, that we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; he cannot win off until he ſpeak.

ſpeak more of the fruits of Chriſt's purchaſe; and for this cauſe he traceth up the matter to the fountain, and ſheweth, how Chriſt is not only the procuring cauſe of peace, but alſo it was in and thro' him that we were at firſt brought into this ſtate of friendſhip and reconciliation; as he procured peace to us from the Father, by ſatisfying juſtice, ſo hath he taken us by the hand, and led us up to court, that the reconciliation might be mutual, leſt any ſhould have thought, that Chriſt did no more, but only ſatisfy juſtice for our offences, and ſo made a patent door for us, that we might come and get a kiſs of the King's hand, if we pleaſed; ſo that whatever more was done, we may thank ourſelves for it, and thus ſhould ſacrifice to our own preparations and doings; and ſo the whole work of reconciliation ſhould not have been wrought by Chriſt, but much of it, if not the moſt part, by ourſelves: for this cauſe the apoſtle ſaith, *By whom alſo we have acceſs, or have had acceſs*, as the verb may be rendered, *unto this*, (or *this ſame*, meaning that of peace laſt mention'd.) *grace wherein we ſtand*; as if he had ſaid, Not only hath Chriſt procured peace to us, on God's part, but alſo he hath taken us, and led us by the hand, who had no will to the journey ourſelves, (as the word will import) preparing us, and moving us to accept of the offer, and working *faith* in us, *by which* we are put into a ſtate of favour; and ſo he hath brought us into this ſtate of favour with God, wherein we enjoy God's favour and good-will, of his mere free grace and bounty; a ſtate which is permanent and unalterable, wherein all believers perſevere and endure to the end; a ſtate *wherein we ſtand*, fixed immoveably.

If we take the firſt part of this verſe in the firſt ſenſe mentioned, we may obſerve,

I. Beſide peace and reconciliation, the Lord alloweth his people free acceſs and

liberty to approach unto him, whereby, in the exerciſe of their graces, they may enjoy intimate fellowſhip and communion with him; and may freely and confidently hold forth their wants, and ſpeak their mind unto him with confidence, as unto their father: *By whom alſo we have acceſs*.

II. Howbeit wicked graceleſs folk, who were never reconciled to God, may imagine they have great acceſs unto God, having ſome overflowings of gifts, and ſome kind of carnal liberty in the exerciſe of them, on ſome ſuch frail grounds; yet this acceſs, and confident approaching unto God, is proper and peculiar only to ſuch as are at peace with God, being juſtified by faith, the reſt being baniſhed from the Lord's gracious preſence, and living in enmity: for *we* (that is, we who being juſtified by faith have peace with God) *have acceſs*, ſays he.

III. Seeing God is a conſuming fire to ſinners out of Chriſt, Heb. xii. 29. and there can be no union or communion betwixt Chriſt and Belial, betwixt light and darkneſs, 2 Cor. vi. 14. 15. therefore there is no acceſs to God with boldneſs and confidence, no familiar approaching unto him, till ſin, which ſeparates betwixt God and us, Iſa. lix. 2. be removed and pardoned, and friendſhip made up; for this bold acceſs is a fruit of juſtification by faith, and floweth from juſtification and reconciliation: *By whom alſo we have acceſs*.

IV. As it is in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt, the Media or betwixt God and man, by whom alone peace is made up betwixt God and us, and we are brought into favour with God, he having ſatisfied juſtice, and taken away the enmity; ſo is it in and through him that we have this liberty in approaching unto God; he openeth the door and brings us into the chamber of preſence, where we may enjoy the favour of God freely: *By whom alſo we have acceſs*.

V. As the darkneſs of believers as to their ſtate and condition, and loſing ſight of
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their interest in Christ, mareth much of their boldness in approaching to God, and prejudgeth them of much sweetness of communion, which otherways they might enjoy; so the lively exercise of faith is the only way of wining to this privilege; so that the more lively our faith be, in gripping and resting on Christ, and the more clear apprehensions we have of our interest in Christ, the greater will our liberty and access be: *By whom also we have access by faith.*

VI. So averse and backward are even believers, who have right unto the enjoyment of this comfortable and precious privilege of access to God, to the making use of it according as they ought and are allowed to do, that Christ, in a manner, must take them by the hand, and lead them in to the court, and this he doth by his Spirit, Eph. ii. 18. the word imports this, signifying a manuduction, a leading in.

Taking the words in the later sense, we LEARN,

I. A spiritual soul cannot win soon off the meditation of the sweet and excellent privileges and benefits purchased by Christ's mediation; but one particular calleth another to mind: therefore says he, *By whom we have access into this grace.*

II. The covenant of grace is so framed, as man's hand is clean as to the procuring of the spiritual benefits contained therein, and Christ being the Mediator thereof, is to be acknowledged, both as to the rise, progress, and perfection of every spiritual blessing promised in the new covenant; for it is *in and thro' him that we have even the very access into this grace*; he it is who first openeth the door, and bringeth us in.

III. Tho' we had done the offence, and was the only party offending, and could have no happiness nor life without him, whom we have offended; yet such is our folly and madness, that even when we are invited and called to come back and make peace, we are averse and unwilling; the

first offer of peace and reconciliation comes never on our side; naturally we are unwilling to be at peace, and we love to live at variance, therefore we must be led, as it were, by the hand, as the word signifieth: *we have this manuduction, or access.*

IV. Christ Jesus being a complete Mediator and days-man betwixt God and us, would not only remove the enmity on God's part, by satisfying justice, but would also take away the enmity on our parts, and bring us to a willingness of agreement; and so as he brings God down to man, so doth he bring man up to God: *by him* it is that *we have access into this grace in which we stand.*

V. The way how we are brought to lay down arms, which we have been bearing against God, and become reconciled unto him, is by faith embracing an offered Mediator, and resting upon him; *by whom we have access into this grace by faith.*

VI. This state wherinto believers are brought by faith, is a state in which much of God's grace shineth eminently; grace did first contrive it, grace doth bring it about, and grace perfects the same: and a state it is of much friendship, good-will, favour, and kindness; it is a state which is all grace, and altogether free, man contributing nothing thereto, and is therefore called *grace*; *we have access into this grace.*

VII. Howbeit true believers may decay in grace, for a long time, in many particulars, and may, through their failings, lose many tokens of God's love and good-will, and so miss that peace of conscience, that joy in the Spirit, Psalm li. throughout, and other clear evidences of their interest in Christ, and right to glory; yet seeing God's act of justifying a sinner, believing in Christ, is complete and perfect at first, and needs not be renewed, and Christ has made a complete and full satisfaction, so that he needeth not die the second time, and hath hereby procured peace and reconciliation betwixt God, who *loveth to the end*, and men, whom he has made will-
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ing to be reconciled, and has brought up to court, they cannot fully and finally fall from that state of friendship, and become enemies again; this state is a standing, abiding state; it is *grace wherein we stand*.

From the last words of the verse, *And rejoice*, &c. OBSERVE,

I. The life which believers are to have hereafter, is a life of *glory*, wherein they shall wear a crown of glory, 1 Pet. v. 4. after they are *raised up in glory*, 1 Cor. xv. 43. and have upon them *an eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. being possessed of that glorious habitation of the saints, which is the paradise of God, 2 Cor. xii. 4. and enjoying the fellowship of glorified saints and angels, Heb. xii. 22. 23. *We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*, so that they shall be free of all toil, trouble, and misery, Rev. xiv. 13. and xxi. 4. of sin, and temptations to sin, &c.

II. This glory, whereof believers shall one day be put in possession, is excellent and incomprehensible, for it is *the glory of God*; a glory which the most wise and glorious God has appointed for them; a life of glory in full enjoying of himself, and of that unspeakable life of blessedness with himself, beholding *him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. and *face to face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Rev. xxii. 4. Matth. xviii. 10. viz. apprehensibly, in so far as they are capable, tho' not comprehensively, he being *invisible*, Col. i. 15. 1 Tim. i. 17. and vi. 16. see Eph. i. 18.

III. Howbeit it hath pleased God to bestow upon believers, on this side of time, many special privileges, as the earnest of more to be had afterward; yet he hath thought good to reserve the main, till corruption hath put on incorruption, so that the best share is yet but hoped for, and is not had in possession: *We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*. See Eph. i. 18.

IV. Howbeit carnal persons, who are yet in black nature, may fancy to them-

selves a right to glory, and have a groundless hope, which may puff them up, but will perish and prove unserviceable, Job viii. 13. 14. xi. 20. and xxvii. 41. Psalm xi. 7. yet a true well-grounded hope of glory, is the privilege only of believers, Eph. ii. 12. and i. 18. 2 Cor. iii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 8. 2 Thess. ii. 16. and floweth from justification by faith, Tit. iii. 7. Heb. vi. 19. 1 Pet. i. 3. For, *being justified by faith---we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*: This is another fruit that flows from justification by faith.

V. However the wicked may look upon the hope of the godly as a dream, and account them fools in hoping for that which is out of sight, seeing themselves take nothing for certain which is only promised, and is not apprehended by sense; yet really it is no fancy, but a real thing, founded upon solid and lasting grounds, and yielding true matter of joy and consolation: *We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*.

VI. Albeit the day of uninterrupted joy be but to dawn, and the full harvest of rejoicing be yet to come, when all tears shall be wiped from their eyes, Heb. xxi. 4. yet the Lord, in this valley of tears, alloweth his own people to joy and rejoice in him, Psalm xxxiii. 1. Job ii. 23. Phil. iii. 1. and iv. 4. and that at all times, 1 Thess. v. 16. even in sufferings, Col. i. 24. Acts v. 41. *We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*.

VII. One main ground of rejoicing, which may bear up the spirits of his people in the worst times, is the hope and to look to that inheritance which is incorruptible, which they have good ground to expect, 1 Pet. i. 4. 5. 6. Luke x. 20. therefore, says he, *We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*.

VERSES 3. 4. 5. *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience;*

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:
And hope maketh not ashamed,-----

THAT the former fruit of justification by faith, which the apostle mentioned, might be more amplified, he seteth down another effect, by way of preventing an objection, which might seem to arise from the benefit last mentioned, thus: You say believers *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*, how can that be now, seeing they have a sorry, poor, afflicted life of it? how can they either rejoice, or have any hope of glory, that are in such a miserable condition here away? He answereth, That afflictions and tribulations which they endure, are so far from marring their hope of glory, that they rather promote the same, and that they no way hinder their joy and rejoicing; both which he cleareth by saying, *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations*; even in tribulations we rejoice, the worst of them cannot daunt our courage; we know they are but momentary, and they cannot make a separation betwixt God and us, Rom. viii. 28. 35. yea, they do us much good, even here away: For, 1. *Tribulation worketh out patience*, not by way of merit, (for the word never imports that, but always the producing of an effect, either as the first cause, 2 Cor. v. 5. or second efficient, be it of evil, Rom. i. 27. ii. 9. and vii. 8. 1 Cor. v. 3. 1 Pet. iv. 3. or of good, 2 Cor. ix. 11. Eph. vi. 13. or instrumental, Rom. iv. 15. 2 Cor. iv. 17. James i. 3. and so here) but as an instrumental cause, or occasion, through God's grace making believers become obedient in suffering, not repining and grudging against God; knowing that as formerly he has wrought good to them thereby, and at length delivered them therefrom; so also he is able to do in their present trouble. And, 2. *Patience produceth experience*; as tribulations and crosses, which God sends upon his own, for the trial of their faith, works

patience, James i. 3. so patience, under God's sharp dispensations, whereby they wait for deliverance, helps them to see many proofs of God's kindness, in the meantime, and of his faithfulness in delivering them in the end, and so helps forward experience. And, 3. *Experience* helps forward *hope*; it helps them to expect a mitigation of the present evils, and a future deliverance out of all troubles whatsoever. And, 4. *Hope maketh not ashamed*; hope thus prompted by frequent proofs and experiences of God's faithfulness and goodness, maketh the soul to rejoice in the saddest days it can be in. And thus tribulations are so far from marring believers hope of glory, or yet their joy, that they rather help them forward; for being now justified by faith, they rejoice even in hope.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Howbeit such as are justified by faith in Christ, are free from the lashes of God's curse and wrath, yet are they not free from the lashes of the indignation of men and devils; so that justification is so far from keeping them from tribulation, that the rather they will meet with persecution at the hands of Satan's instruments, and Satan will not be slack to bring on afflictions; the Lord ordering all wisely, and permitting all for his own glory and their good; for here such as are justified meet with *tribulation*, that is, pressing affliction: See John xvi. 33.

II. Though justification will not exempt folk from tribulation in a world, yet such as are justified by faith may rejoice in the darkest day of distress they can meet with. The grounds of a believer's joy are such as cannot be shaken by all the strong blasts of persecution and crossing dispensations in themselves, however they may be hid from the eyes of believers, upon those, or other occasions, whereby believers may droop and hing their heads: *But we glory in tribulation.*

III. Whatever carnal stoutness and hardness

dineſs carnal ones may have in the day of trouble, whereby they may ſeem courageous, and no way daunted or moved with all the afflictions they lie under, which even heathens may attain to; yet true joy, courage, and magnanimity, is proper only for believers, and is a fruit flowing from juſtification: *Being juſtified by faith, we glory in tribulation.*

IV. The joy of believers is not of the nature of the joy of the hypocrite, which is but for a moment, Job xx. 5. but it grows in the fouleſt, coldeſt winter weather, no leſs than in the hotteſt and faireſt ſummer; as in proſperity, when all is fair before them, and they enjoying fair and clear views of the crown of glory, which they have a right to; ſo in adverſity, when all ſeemeth black about them, *they rejoice not only in the hope of the glory of God, but alſo they joy in tribulation:* ſee Hab. iii. 17. 18.

V. As it is a greater matter for a believer to joy in tribulation or perſecution, than to rejoice when heaven is within their view; ſo one may no leſs conclude themſelves juſtified, from their ſpiritually and heavenly joyful deportment under croſſes, when they cannot win to a clear ſight of the inheritance, or of their intereſt thereto; than if they were never ſo raviſhed with joy thro' the hope of the glory of God: Therefore it is added, as another fruit and effect of juſtification, and that with a *but alſo*, (which makes it a greater matter) that they *joy in tribulation; and not only ſo, but we joy in tribulation alſo.*

VI. This rejoicing in tribulation, which believers may, and often-times do attain to, is far beyond the capacity and reach of carnal men, who walk only by ſenſe, and do not perceive, how even then the believer is upon the gaining hand, and reapeth advantage; ſo, that as this joy of believers ſeemeth groundleſs and unreaſonable unto blind natural people, ſo is it a joy, which they are not acquainted with.

This is the objection which the apoſtle answereth, by ſaying, *and not only ſo, but alſo we rejoice in tribulation.*

VII. The want of a clear uptaking of the great advantage which redoundeth to believers, by the ſadeſt afflictions which they can meet with, doth much mar their rejoicing under ſad diſpenſations; and that we may rejoice according to the Lord's allowance in the darkeſt days, we would ſtudy the advantage we will get thereby: *Wherefore, ſays he, knowing that tribulation worketh patience.*

VIII. Howbeit afflictions in themſelves be matter of ſadneſs and grief, and means to drive from God, when they are not ſanctified; yet, thro' God's bleſſing, whereby all things work for the beſt to them that love him, Rom. viii. 28. they are uſeful and advantageous, for correction, 1 Cor. xi. 30. humbling, Job xxx. 16. 17. diſcovering our weakneſs, Pſalm xxxix. 11. encouragement to duty, Pſalm xxxix. 12.; and in particular, believers are hereby getting oceaſion to exerciſe their patience, this grace hereby is put to work, *tribulation worketh patience;* it puteth them to a humble ſubmiſſion and condeſcendency, accepting chearfully what the Lord carves out for them, and putting their mouth in the duſt, and ſitting ſilent, becauſe he doth it.

IX. So long as a ſoul fretteth and repineth againſt God's diſpenſations, and is like a wild bull in a net full of the fury of the Lord, Iſa. li. 20. and is not ſitting down handſomly and contentedly under the yoke, and has not learned to wait on the Lord, until his time come, with patience and ſubmiſſion of ſpirit; afflictions are not working kindly, and the ſoul is hereby hindered from that life of joy, in the miſt of them, which otherwiſe he might have; when tribulations work kindly, they work patience, and when this is done, then they joy in tribulation; *we joy in tribulation; knowing that tribulation worketh patience.*

From

From verses 4. 5. OBSERVE.

I. Among other sweet fruits and effects of sanctified affliction, which the godly may, and (if by their own fault they pre-judge not themselves) often do meet with, this of experience is one, whereby they get a proof of Satan's malice, cruelty, power where God permits, and impotence where he forbideth; and of the wicked's hatred in acting under Satan, and forsaking them when their back is at the wall, 2 Tim. i. 15. and iv. 14.; and of the kindness of the godly, 2 Tim. i. 16.: so, in a special manner, they meet with clear proofs of God's power upholding, 2 Cor. xii. 9. of his wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness, in making good his promise, and wisely bringing it about, and of his mercy let out in the mean while: *and patience, experience.*

II. Impatience and fretting under God's dispensations, doth so blind souls, that they cannot see nor observe how God is proving himself even then gracious, merciful, powerful and faithful; and the way to win to a rich register of those useful experiments, is to be free from the jumbling and incompasure of spirit which impatience breedeth: for afflictions only worketh experience, when first they work patience; and then *patience, experience.*

III. Tho' afflictions, when they work not kindly, doth much to brangle folks hope of glory, seeing then they smell of wrath, and seem to be sent from justice, and not from a father, and so darken folks interest; yet, when sanctified of God, they become an occasion of strengthening and confirming their hope: therefore it is added, *and experience, hope.*

IV. The way to improve afflictions and sad pressing dispensations, so as our hope of glory be not weakened, but rather strengthened, is to be diligent in marking and treasuring up the several experiences of God's love and faithfulness, seeing God who keeps promise in one particular, will

do so in another; and the more experiences of this kind we meet with, the stronger will our hope be; for it is *experience that worketh hope.*

V. That hope which is strengthened and confirmed by several proofs of God's love and faithfulness evidenced in sad afflictions, will bear up the spirit of a man, and keep him from fainting in a dark day; yea, and yield him cause of rejoicing because of the to-look to the glory which is coming: *and hope maketh not ashamed.*

VERSE 5. ----- *Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

WHAT the apostle said before, he here confirmeth, *viz.* that afflictions and tribulations do not diminish their hope of glory, nor yet mar their joy and rejoicing in hope, by this argument, Believers have *the Holy Ghost*, the third person of the Trinity *given them*, as a guest to dwell and abide in them, as in his temple; and among other sweet and excellent works which he worketh there, this is one, *he sheddeth abroad the love of God in their hearts*; that is, he fully convinceth and persuadeth them of God's love (for so it must be taken, and not for our love of God, because it is confirmed by the death of Christ, verse vii. 8. which is only a fruit of God's love, John iii. 17. 1 John iii. 16. and is made the basis of our boasting and rejoicing, even in adversity, which cannot be said of our love) and that so abundantly, as it is in a manner diffused thro' the soul, poured out, and shed abroad. So then, believers being persuaded of God's love, that they are dearly beloved of him, may well rest confident in expecting life and glory, (as the apostle proveth afterward) and may rejoice in hope of that glory, in the worst times.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Though natural people, who are strangers to God and to his way of dealing,

ing, may judge them best beloved who are least troubled with outward crosses and tribulations; yet, as no man knoweth either love or hatred by all such external dispensations, Eccles. ix. 1. so God's love towards his people will not exempt them from external crosses, nor will external tribulations and crossing dispensations give any just ground of questioning God's love: for there may be *love* where there are *tribulations*.

II. How sad and sharp-soever crosses be, yet, when they are rightly taken up, and a right use made of them, they will not be able to darken folks apprehension and lively sense of the love of God toward them; but even in the darkest day a believer may win to read the love of God towards him in capital letters; *even then the love of God may be shed abroad*.

III. As God from all eternity hath loved his chosen ones with the love of benevolence, Jer. xxxi. 3. and in due time hath made his love of beneficence shine upon them, in calling them out of darkness into his kingdom of light, and bestowed upon them many special fruits and effects of his love; as justification, adoption, reconciliation, sanctification, joy in the Holy Ghost, &c. so he thinks not this enough, but in his own time and way, will also convince those of his own, whom he thinks fit, of his love towards them; and make them feel the same; *his love is shed abroad in their hearts*.

IV. That which doth much mar a believer's joy and gladness in a time of distress and calamity, is a want of a clear sight of his interest in God, and the want of the sense and lively uptaking of his love terminated on us; for to get once the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, were the most effectual way to win to rejoicing in tribulation, thro' the hope of glory: therefore it is given as a reason, *because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts*.

V. As God doth most wisely dispense such allowances as tend to a believer's well-

being, rather than his simple being, and therefore lets them out more or less, as he thinks fit; so doth he this, in particular, of the sense and lively feeling of his love, and therefore sometimes diffuseth it in great abundance, and sheddeth it abroad through the soul; and so though all believers be not made partakers hereof, nor live under the sensible warm manifestations and rays of the love of God: yet it is a privilege attainable, and believers may attain to this pitch of persuasion and confidence, as to have their interest past doubt, and to have assurance, yea, a full assurance of hope; for *the love of God may be shed abroad in their hearts*.

VI. Howbeit carnal wretches may, upon carnal grounds, deceive themselves with a false persuasion, that all is right betwixt God and them, and have some dreams and fancies in their own brain of this; yet the confidence of believers is not a fancy, or imagination in their heads, but a real thing, upon real grounds: therefore *the love of God is said to be shed abroad in their hearts*.

VII. This assurance or persuasion which believers may attain unto, is not the result of carnal wit or reason; it is not within the power of man's reach, but is brought about by the Spirit of God allenarly, opening up the spiritual understanding, to take up things aright, Eph. i. 18. *this love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost*.

VIII. Among other great gifts which God bestoweth upon such as are his own, this is one; he has given them the Holy Ghost to dwell and abide in them, as a comforter, leader, and instructor, so as they become *temples of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. vi. 19. and iii. 16. *The Holy Ghost which is given unto us*.

IX. The Holy Ghost which is given to believers, is really the third person of the Trinity, and not his gifts and operations of grace in the hearts of believers, distinct from himself; for beside the love of God which is shed abroad in the hearts of believers,

lievers, which is a work of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost himself is said to be given: *By the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

VERSE 6. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

FOR the understanding the last reason brought by the apostle, *viz.* That tribulations cannot mar believers rejoicing in the hope of glory, because even then they have clear testimonies of God's love toward them, his love shed abroad in their hearts; he first proves the antecedent of the reason, by shewing one main fruit and effect of God's love. *viz.* Christ's death, and amplifieth the same, as God's love manifested therein might shine forth more conspicuously, verses 6. 7. 8. Next he proves the consequence, or how, from this love, which eminently appeared in the death of Christ, shed abroad in their hearts, their hope of heaven is kept up, notwithstanding of all calamities, verses 9. 10.

In this sixth verse he points out a main fruit and effect of God's love, *viz.* Christ's death, which he amplifieth from some considerable circumstances; as, 1. in that it was for such as were *without strength*; that is, such as were lying in a lost condition, under the sentence of death, and unable to relieve themselves, by making any satisfaction for their offences; yea, or to embrace and welcome any course offered for their release. 2. Not only so, but it was for such as were *ungodly*, and so no way worthy of any respect, or testimony of love at his hand. And, 3. he died *in due time*, at the very nick of time fore-appointed; he would not defer a moment longer.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Man by sinning against God, as he fell from that happy condition wherein he once was, so he became every way miserable, and so lost all strength and ability to

help himself out of that miserable gulf; he cannot now contribute the least for his own relief, and hence he is said to be *dead in sins and trespasses*, Eph. ii. 1. *having their understandings darkened*, Eph. iv. 18. so as they *know not God*, 1 Cor. i. 21. nor *the things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. and their wills perverted, so as they *cannot please God*, Rom. viii. 8.; they are now weak whatever men may dream of the power of free-will; *while we were yet weak.*

II. Not only are we by nature weak and impotent, and so unable to help ourselves, or take help when it is offered to us; but also we are perverse, wicked and ungodly, and so have nothing to commend us to God, but rather every thing which may provoke God to wrath against us; *he died for the ungodly.*

III. It doth much tend to the commendation of the unparalleled love of God, towards sinners, that notwithstanding we were impotent, and so unable to help ourselves, or to require him for his kindness toward us, yea, and wicked, unworthy of any such favour at his hand; yet it seemed good in his eyes, whose love is unspeakable, to send his Son to die for us that were such: *While we were yet weak, in due time Christ died for us.*

IV. The covenant being broken, whereby poor man was liable to death, and being unable to satisfy justice, there was a necessity, by reason of the commination and established law, that, seeing they could not by their death satisfy justice, and win free, that Christ coming in their room, as cautioner, and full undertaker, Heb. vii. 22. Psalm lxxix. 4. should die, and so bear the punishment due for our sins, Matth. x. 45. 2 Tim. ii. 6. Heb. ix. 13. 14. *He died.*

V. Christ's death being *not for himself*, Dan. ix. 26. he having done nothing worthy of death, Isa. liii. 9. John viii. 46. Heb. vii. 26. but *for us*, Isa. liii. 5. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 23. 24. 25. and he being *surety*, Heb. vii. 22. and of purpose taking on our nature, Heb. ii. 16. and being *made under*

the law, that he might pay the debt due by us; was not only for our good, (as in some measure it was for the good of angels, who never sinned, viz. that he might become their head, Col. ii. 10 or Phil. ii. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. Rom. x. 9. 11. yea, and for the good of the whole creation, Rom. viii. 20. 21. 22. 23.) but also it was in our stead; and Christ is to be looked on as standing in our place; he is said to die *for the ungodly*; where *us* (*for*) must be so taken as importing this; in that, 1. His death is made the most eminent and rare fruit of God's love here, and John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 9. 10. 21.; but if thereby he did no more but confirm his doctrine, it would not point forth the love of God in a more eminent manner than his life and miracles, or yet the death of other martyrs, whereby his doctrine was abundantly confirmed; but it is clearly made an evidence beyond all questioning, and an evidence of a love beyond all comparison. 2. In that if his death had been only for our good to confirm his doctrine, it could not be more for one than for another: but here his death is held forth to be for some only, among whom Paul reckoneth himself; and to be such as none can draw comfort from, but those who are justified by faith, it is those who have this love of God (whereby Christ was sent to die for them in particular) shed abroad in their hearts.

VI. Christ's death, being *a ransom*, Mark x. 45. and a ransom accepted, 2 Cor. v. 14. paid as satisfaction to justice in their behalf, for whom it was paid (as we shewed in the former doctrine) so that they might be saved and delivered from wrath and the curse of the law; could not be payed for all, seeing all are not delivered and saved thereby, and all cannot be made partakers of that joy which cometh from the love of God being shed abroad in their hearts, because Christ has laid down his life for them: now it is only such as are, or shall be justified, who are, or shall be made partakers of this lively sense and ap-

prehension of God's love in sending Christ to die for them, while ungodly and weak, and so Christ died only for such.

VII. Such a desire had Christ to the fulfilling of the work of redemption, Luke ix. 51. and such love to the salvation of poor sinners, that he would not delay the delivering up of himself one moment beyond the time appointed; and his coming at the set period speaks out much of his love; *he died in due time*; see Gal. iv. 4.

VIII. When the Spirit of God convinceth people, and lets them clearly see their interest in Christ, and that they were given to Christ in particular, to be saved, and that accordingly Christ did, in due time, lay down his life for them, and in their behalf satisfy justice; then doth he shed abroad the love of God in their hearts: for thus he cleareth how this love is manifested, by telling them, that *when we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly*.

VERSES 7. 8. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

THis effect of love is amplified from the unparallelableness thereof; the like of this never was, nor never will be. For 1. scarce for a man will one endure much trouble. Nay, 2. Far less will he hazard life and all, and be willing to die. 3. Nay, not for a righteous man will he lay down his life. 4. And be it so, or let us put the case, that some would die for others (as some have done, as it is reported in history) yet it was *for good men*, that is, such as either were, or that they hoped, would be bountiful to their posterity; it being for their country and friends for whom they laid down their life, at the instigation of Satan, for vain glory, and a

fame (as they imagined) immortal. But, says he, it is far otherwite here; for *Christ died for us, even when we were sinners*, and so no way deserving any thing at his hand, being rebels against him, and living in rebellion against him: and so God's love, and Christ's both, are wonderfully commended or declared hereby, as a true and undoubted pledge and token.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The Lord from all eternity, had a purpose according to the counsel of his own will, Eph. i. 11. *a good pleasure which he purposed in himself*, Eph. i. 9. and a purpose according to election, Rom. ix. 11. and a love of benevolence and good-will towards some of mankind, whom he minded to make vessels of honour for the glory of his free and matchless grace: for this is the love here spoken of, and wonderfully commended; *God commended his love towards us*.

II. This love of God being an eternal act of his will, and so himself, (there being nothing in him, which is not himself, who is a most pure simple act) cannot be any natural affection or propensity in him towards the good of the creature, seeing such would argue imperfection in him, if he did not effectuate what he so affected. And further, this love here mentioned is a special love, a most intense love, and unparalleled; yea, the most transcendent love that ever was shewed to the creature, a love from which floweth the greatest gift (*viz.* Christ Jesus) that ever was bestowed on any creature; *God commended his love, that -- Christ died for us*.

III. Notwithstanding of his love of election and good pleasure, which being an immanent act of God, was to produce some real effect in time about man, even life and salvation, and so is called a purpose according to election, Rom. ix. 11.; yet even the elect, no less than the reprobate, by the fall, became liable to wrath and condemnation, and were really in a state of sin

and misery, and are still ay and while they be brought near to Christ by faith: for notwithstanding of this love, yet even these for whom Christ died are sinners, even under the power of sin, as the word imports, (1 John v. 8. with iii. 9.) *God commendeth his love, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*: See Rom. iii. 9. 10. 19. Eph. ii. 1. 2. 3.

IV. Seeing even the elect by nature, are in a state of sin and misery, lying under the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 13. and obnoxious to the judgment of God, Rom. iii. 9. notwithstanding of this love of election; there was a necessity that satisfaction should be made to justice, and that there should be a formal redemption; yea this love of benevolence and good pleasure is so far from annulling or casting down the merits and satisfaction of Christ as useless, that it is the very womb in which it doth breed, and the one doth necessarily presuppose the other, as the fountain, cause and original: for in that *Christ died, God's love is manifested*.

V. Christ did not die, only that believers might have a free manifestation of God's everlasting love, and might be delivered from that darkness and fear which was upon their consciences by reason of sin; but that a real and full satisfaction might be made to justice for their iniquities, that thereby they might be delivered from the effects of God's wrath, under which they lay no less than others, John iii. 36. For 1. they were sinners really, and not in their own apprehension only; 2. Christ's death then would not seem so necessary as indeed it is; and so, 3. Thereby the love of God would not be so commended as indeed it is: 4. At least not from this consideration, *that while we were yet sinners, he died for us*: 5. Besides, the apostle's dispute would be confounded; for he distinguisheth justification by faith and reconciliation, verse 1. from the discovery of the love of God, verse 5. and makes one the ground of the other.

VI. That

VI. That Chriſt Jeſus did properly die for us, as in our ſtead, and not for our good only, is clear from the compariſon which he here makes; for when men die for others, (let us with the apoſtle ſuppoſe the caſe) or wiſheth to die for others, as Paul did, Rom ix. 3.; it is not that they may be ſaved or not ſaved, but that really they might be ſaved: thus *we* will ſignify, 2 Cor. v. 15. John vi. 51. x. 15. and xi. 50. *Chriſt died for us, when ſcarcely for a righteous man one would adventure to die.*

VII. The death of Chriſt, who was the only Son of God, doth abundantly demonſtrate and manifeſt the unſpeakable love of God towards his own: *God commendeth his love, in that Chriſt died for us*: See John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 9. 10.

VIII. We ought not to look upon the Father, in the buſineſs of our redemption, only as a righteous exactor and ſevere judge, and take up all the love which lyeth in our redemption, as boiling in the breaſt of Chriſt alone: for as there did much love kyth in Chriſt's dying, yea wonderful and incomparable love; ſo did there much love kyth hereby to be in God the Father; for *God commendeth his love, in that --- Chriſt died.*

IX. Tho' by nature we were ſinful rebels, deſerving to be cut off by juſtice, having nothing in us commend-worthy; yet that did not ſcar Chriſt to manifeſt toward us the greateſt reſpect imaginable; and the conſideration of our unworthineſs and ſinfulneſs, ſhould ſerve exceedingly to commend his love towards us; *God commended his love, that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.*

X. As this love is in itſelf unparallelable, ſo it is never rightly taken up, but when it is looked upon as matchleſs and incomparable; and all who are made ſenſible of its rays, with, with the apoſtle, have tranſcending thoughts thereof; for *ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die; --- but God commendeth his love towards us,*

in that while we were ſinners, Chriſt died for us.

XI. The very conſideration of that natural ſelf-love which is imprinted in the hearts of all, ſo that they cannot be induced to quite with their life for the ſafety of another, but with very great difficulty, if at all; nay ſcarcely when there may be ſome ſeen advantage to them or theirs; ſhould highly commend the love of Chriſt unto us, who without any ſeen advantage to be had of us, was content to lay down his life for us moſt willingly; *for ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die; --- but God commendeth his love, &c.*

VERSES 9. 10. *Much more then being justified by his blood, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him.*

For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life.

HAVING thus pointed forth this admirable love of God, in ſending his only Son to die for his own; he now confirmeth and cleareth, how hence believers hope of heaven may be kept up, notwithstanding of all their outward calamities; and ſo he argueth from the leſs to the more, and that in a double comparison: 1. Comparing the ſtate of believers when Chriſt died for them, which was a ſtate of enmity, and their eſtate after they have reaped the fruits of his death, they are now reconciled; and thence thus argueth, If when they were in the eſtate of enmity, Chriſt ſaved not at them, but by the appointment of the Father, died for them, that thereby they might be reconciled unto, and brought into peace and friendſhip with God, much more being thus reconciled and put into a ſtate of friendſhip, they ſhall be ſaved from wrath: it being a far greater work, ſeeming much more improbable and unfeſſible to recon-

cile enemies, than to save friends and reconciled ones, and such as were assailed and absolved from guilt. 2. Comparing the virtue of Christ's death with the virtue of his life; and so thus argueth, verse 10. If there was so much virtue in Christ's death, as to bring us, who were before enemies, into a state of friendship and reconciliation, much more shall there be that virtue in his life and resurrection, which will save such as are reconciled and made friends; and so there is no tribulation or affliction which can hinder believers rejoicing in the hope of glory and salvation, if they once have the persuasion of God's love towards them, in sending his Son to die for them while rank enemies to God.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' justification maketh no real, personal, and physical change upon the person justified, this change being done in sanctification, wherein renovation, and a physical, personal change is wrought, righteousness being infused, and so sin removed and healed; yet in it there is a real relative change of the man's state before God, so that in a moral and law-sense he goeth for another man than he was formerly, and that even in God's account: for here before they were *sinners* and *under wrath*, and now they are *justified*, and *reconciled*, and such as shall be *saved from wrath*; and so God dealeth with them as just, freeing them from condemnation and wrath, and giving undoubted grounds upon which they may certainly expect life.

II. The Lord being just, holy and righteous, who would keep his word, and not suffer any unrighteous person to dwell in glory with him; there is a necessity that before any of the lost race of mankind be saved, and enjoy life eternal, they be first justified and absolved from the guilt of their iniquities: therefore, says he, *---being justified, we shall be saved, &c.*

III. As there was nothing in us, upon the consideration whereof God might have

been moved to pardon our sins, and pass a sentence of absolution upon us, we being sinners in ourselves, and so deserving wrath and condemnation rather than any thing else; so the only meritorious cause of our justification and reconciliation is the sufferings and death of Jesus-Christ, expressed here by his blood: *we are justified by his blood, and reconciled by his death.*

IV. Christ's blood which was shed, and his death which he suffered, was a full and complete satisfaction to the justice of God, being that which God who was offended with our sins, was more pleased and contented with than he would have been with all our deaths, and with our lying in hell for ever; yea, more contented with, than he was discontented with all our sins: for we being under the debt of sin, liable to justice, are *now justified*, or absolved from what justice could crave of us because of the debt of sin under which we lay, and that by *the blood of Christ*; being *now justified by his blood*: see Isa. liii. 11.

V. As Christ in dying, did fully satisfy justice for the sins of his own, so as justice could crave no more at their hand; so he being our *high priest*, Heb. iv. 14. 15. offered up himself a sacrifice, Heb. vii. 27. and thereby made up peace and reconciliation betwixt God and sinners: therefore we are said to be *reconciled by his death*.

VI. Christ's blood was not shed, nor did he die only, that justice being satisfied, and these obstacles which lay in the way, being removed, God might pardon sin upon what condition he thought fit, so that now his good mind and will which always he had towards mankind, might have free passage to break out, it being now at his free disposal whether he would save any or not, or upon what terms; but to purpose actual justification and reconciliation, in God's due time and manner to be applied, unto all such for whom he died: so that as it was God's purpose he should die for his people, for sinners, Matth. xviii. 11. Luke xix. 10. Matth. i. 21. 1 Tim. i.

15. Isa. liii. 10. 11. 12. Heb. ii. 14. 15. Eph. v. 25. 26. 2 Cor. v. 21.; so did he lay down his life (not to purchase a liberty unto God, who might have freely pardoned sins without the mediation and satisfaction of Christ, if it had seemed good in his eyes to have decreed otherwise; for there is no hint for this in scripture, and if so it might have come to pass, that not one soul had been actually redeemed, but) for us, that the good things purchased might be actually applied in due time, to those for whom they were purchased, Tit. ii. 14. John. xvii. 19. Gal. i. 4. and iii. 13. Heb. ix. 12. 14. 26. and i. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Col. i. 21. 22.; therefore it is said, that *we are justified by his blood, and reconciled by his death.*

VII. Albeit Christ did not die, nor shed his blood, to purchase justification and reconciliation conditionally, so as the good things purchased could not be said to be purchased, until the condition be performed, which is absolutely in our power, and not purchased; but to make an absolute purchase, so as both the condition and the good thing to be applied upon the condition, are absolutely purchased for his own, and shall undoubtedly be actually applied and bestowed, and that in due time; yet are not we instantly upon his death, actually, personally and completely justified and reconciled; our reconciliation and justification was at Christ's death compleat and perfect on his part, his purchase being sufficient; yet were not we personally and actually justified then, seeing Christ never purchased those good things in such a manner that instantly they should be applied, but that in the due time condescended on by the Father, and the Son, and in such a manner as they agreed on, *viz* when we should flee in to Christ by faith; for he says, *now being justified*; which *now* is in opposition to the time wherein they were *sinners*, and so denotes their time of believing; and *being reconciled we shall be saved*, saith he: now cer-

tain it is, that none are saved, until they *believe*, and so this reconciliation must suppose *faith in Christ*.

VIII. By nature (tho' at first, in the time of innocency, there was a good understanding betwixt God and man, and sweet communion and a thorough peace) we are born because of sin, enemies to God, Col. i. 21. Rom. viii. 7. so that God is an enemy to us, for we are said to be under his wrath and curse; and thus there is enmity on both sides, which is not only held forth by the word *reconciliation*, or *reconciled*, which properly signifieth, to turn away the anger of the person offended, and bring the offender into favour with him again; but also it is expressly said, that we were enemies, and that we shall be saved thro' him from wrath; *we shall be saved from wrath through him; for if when when we were enemies, &c.*

IX. Albeit, to speak properly, there is no wrath nor anger in God, he being free of all passions and such affections; yet sinners are said to be under his wrath, in that they are lying under the stroke of justice, and liable to punishment the effect of wrath: so we are said to be *saved from wrath*.

X. Christ Jesus by his death and blood did fully, as to merit and the procuring cause, reconcile God to sinners, not only removing the enmity on our parts, or purchasing the removal thereof, but also turning away God's wrath and displeasure, and bringing us into favour again; for as there was enmity on God's part, (to speak so) we lying under *wrath*, so the reconciliation behaved to be mutual, so as his wrath might be averted; and we might have his favour and good-will instead thereof; and the word reconciled imports a mutual reconciliation on both sides, Job xlii. 7. 8. 9. beside that the persons who are here said to be reconciled are called *sinners*, verse 8. and so are lying under God's curse and wrath, and when reconciled this wrath is averted: and further, to be *reconciled*, is the

the same with *being justified*; and to justify is an act of God, and so imports God's reconciliation to us: wherefore we find, verse 11. that we are said to *receive this reconciliation* or atonement, and so it cannot be our reconciliation or conversion, which we are no where said to receive; thus are we said to *be reconciled to God*.

XI. Seeing Christ did not die, nor shed his blood, that God might, if he thought fit, justify, and be reconciled unto sinners, as we shewed, Doctrine VI. nor did purchase these favours conditionally, but absolutely, so as certainly and undoubtedly they were to be applied in God's own time and manner, as was shown, Doctrine VII. it doth undoubtedly follow, that Christ died for no more than such as shall actually be made partakers of justification and reconciliation; and all such for whom his blood was shed, shall, in due time, be justified and reconciled; therefore says he, *Being justified by his blood, and we are reconciled by his death*.

XII. As there is no justification nor reconciliation of sinners but in and through Christ, so is there no salvation, nor freedom from wrath, but in and through him: *We shall be saved from wrath through him, ---we shall be saved by his life*.

XIII. As Christ's blood-shedding and death was useful for his own, being a price wherewith justice was satisfied, and whereby pardon and reconciliation was purchased, so was his resurrection for the behoof of his own, that thereby the good things purchased might be applied, and actually bestowed; hence are we said to *be saved by his life*.

XIV. As life eternal, and deliverance from the wrath and vengeance of God, is to be expected by none but such as are justified, and actually reconciled; so all such, whatever sad dispensations they may meet with in a world, because of their folly, shall certainly be kept from wrath, and shall enjoy life and salvation: for *being*

justified,---we shall be saved from wrath; and being reconciled, we shall be saved.

XV. Howbeit believers certainty and assurance of life and salvation be oftentimes darkened and brangled by Satan, and even they be oftentimes afraid for wrath; yet the right uptaking, and clear and distinct knowledge of that which Christ has done for them formerly; and in particular, the clear knowledge of his dying for them, when they were enemies, and so purchasing reconciliation unto them, when they had nothing to commend them to Christ, may abundantly confirm and persuade them that they shall get life; for this is the force of the argument. *Much more then being now justified we shall be saved,---if when we were enemies we were reconciled---much more being reconciled, shall we be saved, &c.*

VERSE 11. *And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

THIS verse containeth the last of these fruits, which the apostle mentioneth as flowing from justification by faith; and as he mentioned the former, so doth he mention this, with a gradation, as rising higher and higher, saying, *And not only so, but we also joy in God, or glory in him*; that is, we rejoice inwardly, and boast, as being made up for ever, that we have God for our God, propitious towards, and dwelling in us, engaged for us, and all his attributes forthcoming for our good, his power, wisdom, goodness, mercy, &c. all of them on our side; and this is more than to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, though even in tribulations; for here we have God himself immediately, as it were, to glory in, who is the sum and compound of all goodness, and in whom all goodness, and every thing desirable is centered, and exists in its prime.

And.

And next he sheweth the mean and way how this is brought about, or the procuring cause, it is *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. And third, the way how Christ has effectuated this, *viz.* by making reconciliation; *by whom we have now received the atonement*, or reconciliation.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Howbeit believers have oftentimes little in a world to put their hand to; yet having fled in to Christ, they have an interest in God as theirs, whereby they get all their wants supplied and necessities answered; as they have a right to his rich benefits and allowances, so, which is far more, they have a right to himself; so that all that is in him, is, in a manner, forthcoming for their good: *We joy in God*.

II. Howbeit the spirits of God's children be oftentimes low, and they ready to faint through manifold discouragements, occasioned by their own folly, and Satan's temptations; yet the Lord alloweth them strong consolation, and hath given them the greatest grounds imaginable whereupon to boast, exult, glory and rejoice, and alloweth them to make use thereof, and to rejoice thereupon, even here away, tho' the day wherein their joy shall be completed be to come: *We glory in God*.

III. As believers have many rich and unspeakable favours granted to them, and all of them solid grounds of joy and rejoicing; so this is one among the rest, and one of the highest, that not only they have a right to his graces, spiritual favours and manifestations, but also to himself, which is better than all; and believers, in reckoning up their privileges, should end in this, as that in which all the rest are swallowed up, as rivers in the ocean: therefore this is the last time that the apostle says, *not only so*; and now he is as high as he can win: *And not only so, but we joy in God*, says he.

IV. Before any can, upon good ground, claim any right to God as theirs, they must first close with Christ in the offers

of the gospel, so as he may become theirs, even their Lord Jesus Christ; for it is said, *we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*.

V. Though believers have a right to God as theirs, which is a notable ground of rejoicing; yet it is above their strength to make use of this ground of joy, and actually to rejoice thereupon; and Christ must help them to look aright upon this rich privilege, and teach them how to improve it for their comfort, and, withal, stir them up to an actual use-making thereof: for it is added, *We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*.

VI. This interest in God is procured to us by the death of Christ, who did really pacify God, and appease his wrath, which was burning against us, and so reconciled God to us, (for this atonement, or reconciliation, is said to be received, and so must be different from our reconciliation to God, which is nothing but our conversion; see verses 9. 10. Doctrine X.) without whose intercession God would have been still a consuming fire, and we would never have had any right to him, *by whom we received the atonement*.

VII. As all the privileges and rich favours we enjoy, who believe in God, come down to us in and through the merits of Jesus Christ; so we never take them up aright, but when we cleanse ourselves of having any hand, less or more, in the procurement, and ascribe the purchasing of all unto him; to whom the glory thereof allenarly doth belong: then do the favours smell aright. The apostle, as in all the rest, so here, will not mention this without mentioning of Christ by whom it was purchased; saying, *Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement*.

VERSE 12. *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,*

IN this second part of this chapter, the apostle is farther clearing the doctrine of justification, which he hath been handling at large; and as he hath been clearing and amplifying the same, from the precious and excellent effects and fruits that flow therefrom, in the former part; so doth he here amplify and illustrate the same, by comparing the first and second Adam together, that is, Christ and Adam, the type and the antitype. And this illustration serves to clear a doubt which some might propose, *viz.* How can it be, that we who are many, can be all justified by the righteousness of one? How can the righteousness of one serve so many, and be a sufficient ground of their acceptation? This he cleareth by shewing, that as Adam was a public person representing all mankind, and brought sin and death upon all his posterity, by his transgression; so Christ was a public person, and brings righteousness and life to all, whom as a public person he did represent by his obedience. Now this comparison is set down, verse 12. (where we have only the first part of the comparison, the other being left to be gathered, which may easily be done from the following verses; and the same is farther considered and explained, verses 13. 14.) and again more fully, verses 18. 19. And that this business might be the more clear, and his doctrine of justification more confirmed and illustrated, he sets down some particulars wherein those persons differ, and how the advantage lieth upon Christ's side, verses 15. 16. 17. and in end answereth an objection which might have been made against what he was saying, verses 20. 21.

In this verse the comparison is begun, and the first part only set down, and the rest left to be gathered from the nature of contraries, and from the last part of verse 14. where, 1. we have the person who was the type of Christ, and that is Adam, called *one man*, meaning him alone, (tho' we find Eve having a hand in the

guilt, yea, is said to be first in the transgression, 1 Tim. ii. 14. where the Apostle is speaking of the order and manner of Adam's sinning, and so indeed it began at Eve.) because he is now speaking of the manner how this sin is propagated to posterity, which is by the man, and not by the woman. 2. There is that which he did communicate unto his, as a public person; and that is set down in two particulars, (1.) *Sin entered into the world*: He having transgressed the commandment of God, became guilty, and lost the image of God which he at first received, and had nothing but pravity and corruption instead thereof; and as he himself became corrupt, so did all his issue and posterity: thus sin crept into the world, or rushed in as an enemy upon all mankind; he being a public person, and representing them all, conform to the tenor of the covenant which was made with him, and all his posterity in his loins. And, (2.) *death by sin*; that is, because of this transgression by which Adam himself became corrupt, and the same corruption was conveyed by propagation to all his children, seeing they were begotten in his own likeness, Gen. v. 1. all mankind became obnoxious to death, and to all the miseries of this life, which are antecedent to death, and to hell-fire for ever; for by death we understand every thing that goeth under that name in the scriptures, and so take in both spiritual and temporal death, with all the antecedents, consequents or effects thereof. 3. There is the extent of this, how far it reacheth, *viz.* to all mankind, *and so death passed on all men*; on all ranks and conditions of people, none are excepted, death has overspread them all. And, 4. there is the ground of this, and the reason why death has thus passed on all men, in these words, *for that all have sinned*, which some do read thus, *in whom all have sinned*, (the original will suffer both) as 1 Cor. xv. 22. but either of them will serve to the same purpose, upon the matter; and so how-
ever

ever we take them, they will hold forth a ground or reason why because of one man's sin, death passed on all men, viz. because all sinned in that one man, he representing them, and they being in his loins, as Heb. vii. 9. and thus though we take the words as they are rendered, it will no way follow, that Adam's posterity became guilty only by imitation; and that these words, *for that all have sinned*, should be meant of actual transgressions, for which they incur death; seeing, according to the apostle's scope, we must understand it of their sinning in him, who was a public person, otherways this that the apostle speaks of Adam could be no more meant of him than of any other parent, nor of that one particular guilt of his transgressing the covenant, more than of any other of his sins; whereas the apostle speaks of one particular sin in the singular number, pointed forth by a particle; and which is farther set forth in the following verses, by several other names.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho', at the beginning, God made man upright, and endowed the nature of man with many spiritual endowments and qualifications, as righteousness, knowledge, and holiness; yet now there is a sad and doolful change, and nothing but sin and deformity, instead of that excellent image of God which man, at the beginning had; *for sin is now entered into the world*.

II. This sad and lamentable alteration was procured by the sin of Adam, who broke the covenant which God made with him and all his posterity; he being the stock and root of all mankind, and being concredited with all the stock-purse of mankind, plaid bankrupt, and the loss redounded not only to himself, but to all his posterity also, who were to come of him by ordinary generation; for *by one man sin entered into the world*: He was a public person, and stood and fell as a public person representing all mankind, so that

his sin was not personal only, but was also natural, or the universal guilt of all mankind, or of the nature of man.

III. So that all men and women breathing have not only now lost the image of God, but have their whole nature corrupted, so that the mind is blinded, Eph. iv. 17. and v. 8. 2 Cor. iv. 4. and iii. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 14. and the will perverted, Jer. xvii. 9. Math. xxiii. 37. and the whole man defiled, Rom. vii. 14. Psalm v. 10. x. 3.---12. xiv. 1. liii. 2. and xxxvi. 2.---6. Isa. lix. 3. and so there is none excepted, Job xiv. 5. Psalm li. 7. and this kyths very early, prompting every man to sin, unless grace restrain: *Sin entered into the world,---for that all have sinned*.

IV. This corruption of nature whereby we are bent to all mischief, and wholly inclined to wickedness, and all wickedness, and that continually, (which is commonly called *original sin*, as being an hereditary stain, defiling us so soon as we have a being, and sticking to us from our very conception) is not to be looked on as an infirmity, or defect only, but as properly and really sin before God, being the transgression of a law, which prohibiteth not only vitious acts, but also vitious habits, and every thing which prompteth and inclineth to sin; for here it is called *sin*, and such a sin as hath death for the wages thereof; *sin entered into the world, and death by sin*. Yea, it is in some kind voluntary, viz. in respect of the will of Adam, which was the first original of this evil.

V. This original blot, and vitious disposition, cometh from Adam unto all his posterity by propagation; parents, however sanctified themselves, conveying to their children (whom they beget according to the flesh, and not as renewed by the Spirit) the same, by begering them in their own likeness: *By one man sin entered into the world*.

VI. Tho' this original sin has its seat in the whole man, and has defiled all the

faculties of soul and body, and chiefly the soul; yet it is not any substance, substantial image of Satan, or any part of the man's substance, but sticks to him as an accident to its subject; and so it is said to have entered into the world, that is, into men inhabiting the world, so as their essence is not therefore changed: *Sin entered into the world.*

VII: Howbeit we should suppose, that Adam in the state of integrity, in regard of his body, which was made of corruptible elements, was naturally corruptible; yet if he had stood in the state in which he was created, he should never have died, but have lived continually, free of all danger of death; for death entered into the world by sin, and so unless sin had been, man had never actually died: *And death by sin.*

VIII. Albeit our first parents did not immediately die, and return to the dust, upon their transgressing of the covenant; yet immediately did they pass into a state of death, becoming subject to the miseries of this life, as *labour*, Gen. iii. 19. *shame*, Gen. iv. 7. *pain*, Gen. iii. 16. *sickness*, Matth. ix. 2. John v. 14. and *death* itself, Heb. ix. 27. Rom. viii. 10. yea, and the *pains of hell* for ever; for *death entered by sin.*

IX. All men of whatsoever rank, quality or condition, are, by nature, subject to all the miseries in this world, liable to God's curse and wrath, being enemies to him, and without his favour and goodwill, and to hell for evermore; yea, and all must taste of death, and all because of sin, which only hath procured all these: *And death by sin, and so death passed on all men.*

X. Albeit the posterity of Adam was not then in being when the covenant was broken; yet seeing it seemed good in the eyes of him who is only wise, to transact with Adam, not as a single person for himself alone, but as a common person representing all mankind, as the root and

head of that great family, his guilt is imputed unto them, and they, being then in his loins, are accounted transgressors; all which was done by the good pleasure of God; and therefore it is added, *For that all have sinned.*

XI. The consideration of this, that we sinned in Adam, and have that guilt imputed to us, should satisfy us concerning the equity of God, in laying on upon us the sad consequences of that sin, *viz.* original pravity, separation from God, death, with all its antecedents and concomitants, and should abundantly stop our mouths; therefore he addeth this as a reason to clear it. *For that all have sinned, or all have sinned in him.*

VERSES 13. 14. *For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,---

BEfore the apostle proceeds farther, he confirmeth what he had said touching the imputation of Adam's guilt, and spreading of the contagion of original corruption, *viz.* that it reacheth all without exception, by clearing it as to one instance which would be most questioned, or doubted of; for it might be said, that no body could be guilty of any sin before there was a law promulgated, and that was not until the days of Moses, and so at least from Adam to Moses people were free of this, seeing *where there is no law, sin is not imputed.* To this he answereth, and saith, 1. It is true, *where there is no law sin cannot be imputed*; that is, folk cannot be punished for the breach of a law which is not; but, 2. there was a law by which sin and guilt was bound over upon the back of people; and by this he doth not mean the law of nature, because that could not reach infants, of whom he is mainly speaking

ing here; but the law given to all mankind in Adam: and that there was such a law he proveth by this argument; Where sin is imputed, and *death* (which is the wages of sin) *reigneth*, there there was a law; but *death* *reigned* from Adam to Moses, (as a most cruel enemy, sweeping away young and old) *even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*; that is, such as never did commit any actual sin, nor offended God by their own proper transgression, as Adam did; and so he meaneth infants. And by this argument also he proveth, that sin was in the world even until the law; that is, that Adam's sin was imputed unto them, and they were found guilty of original sin, because if they had not been guilty, God would never have punished them with death; death would not have reigned as it did.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The posterity of Adam are not guilty before God, of Adam's fault, by way of imitation; that is not the way how Adam's sin is made over to them, and they become tainted with original pravity; for we find that such are said to be guilty thereof, by the apostle, who were not in a capacity of imitating any, *viz.* infants, *who never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, for death reigned over such.*

II. External judgments, and death, inflicted upon any, young or old, do abundantly evidence them to be guilty of original sin at least; for this is the apostle's argument, whereby he would prove, that children had original sin upon them, because *death reigned over such.*

III. Since Adam fell, however the godly be freed from the curse and sting which is in death, yet all without exception must strike sail thereto, or to something equivalent, this being unavoidably annexed unto transgression; therefore says he, *death reigned*. It has a kind of dominion and authority over all breathing; it being ap-

pointed that all (except whom God singularly excemeth, as Enoch and Elias, and such as shall be in life at the last day) *must die*, Heb. ix. 27.

IV. Though infants be not capable of yielding obedience unto any command; yet are they guilty of the breach of that law which God gave to Adam, and they were bound to yield obedience thereunto; not as if they themselves could have done it, being not yet born, but in Adam their nature was bound, for he was bound not only to personal obedience, but unto obedience of the whole nature; and this is clear from their being subject unto death, *for*, says he, *sin is not imputed where there is no law*: and so they had not born the punishment of sin, if there had not been a law above their heads; and so the very natural contagion, wherewith they are infected, is prohibited by the law, otherwise it would not be imputed unto them.

V. We may be sure that there is no sin so small, but it deserveth death at the hands of God, seeing he punisheth infants with death, for that sin to which they never gave any personal consent, but only in their nature, and for that which they did not personally commit, but was only imputed to them; yet, according to justice and equity, *death reigned even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.*

VI. Carnal reason, which is always an enemy to God and his ways, can hardly digest this, that infants, (whom ordinarily people count innocents) who never committed any actual transgression, should be bound over unto punishment, but Christians should be captivated unto obedience to, and belief of, the revealed mind of God; and therefore doth Paul particularize infants, and shew, that seeing *death reigned over them*, therefore sin was in them, and they were guilty before God; for *death reigned even over such as had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.*

VERSE 14. 15. 16. 17. ----- *Who is the figure of him that was to come:*

But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

IN the latter end of this fourteenth verse, the apostle coucheth up the other part of the comparison betwixt Adam and Christ, or the first and second Adam, in these words: *Who is the figure of him who was to come*; that is, was a type of Christ who some time was to come, but now is come: not as if Adam were in all his actions a type of Christ, but only in that particular which he now mentioneth, viz. That as by the first Adam sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so by the second Adam righteousness entered, and life by righteousness.

But now, lest it should have been thought that these two Adams did agree in all points, because he called the one a type of the other, and that he may make way for the more full illustration of this business, he sets down several particulars, verses 15. 16. 17. wherein they do differ, and how the advantage is on Christ's side. 1. Then, says he, *Not as the offence, so also is the free gift*; that is, there is a difference betwixt Adam's guilt, which was imputed unto his posterity, and the righteousness of Christ which is a free gift of grace, bestowed freely on Christ's issue, in that the one is more efficacious than the other; for he says, *If through the*

offence of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many; that is, if to be that one man's offence and fall, could hurt more than himself, and put them under the curse and sentence of death, by involving them in the same guilt, certainly much more will more be made partakers of God's grace and free love, and be put into a state of grace, and get pardon and reconciliation by Jesus Christ, that one Man; so that the advantage is on Christ's side: For, (1.) the second Adam, being Jesus Christ the Son of God, is stronger than the first; and, (2.) God's free grace is stronger than man's sin. The next difference is set down, verse 16 and is taken from the nearest effects of both; therefore says he, *And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift*; that is, there is a difference betwixt that condition which we are into by Christ, and that which we are into by Adam; or betwixt guilt, which came in by Adam, and righteousness, which came in by Christ: And what is that? *For the judgment, or guilt, was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences, unto justification*; that is, the fruit and effect of the one is condemnation, and that is all which we get by Adam; but that which we get out of God's free grace in Christ, is justification, full and free pardon of our sins, and freedom from condemnation; and withal, he sheweth, how the advantage is on Christ's side, in saying, that *the free gift is of many offences*, whereas the judgment is for or by *one sin*, (for so *one* may be taken as meant of one sin, as well as of one Adam); by Christ Jesus we are not freed from one only guilt, but from all our other transgressions, and so he became the author of many good things. The third difference is set down, verse 17. and which confirmeth the former, and is taken from the more remote end of both; *For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace,*

grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life, by one, Jesus Christ: The fruit and effect of Adam's offence is death, and death reigning; death reigns over all the posterity of Adam; but the effect of Christ's righteousness is life, and a reigning life; all his shall *reign in life*. And the advantage here is on Christ's side also: For, (1.) Jesus Christ is stronger than sin; and, (2.) God's grace, and the gift of righteousness, is stronger than sin; and, (3.) abundance of grace is more strong than one offence, (for so one may be understood in the last place) and to seeing they that have but one offence imputed to them are subject unto the dominion of death, much more shall they live, and reign in life, who have received abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, by Jesus Christ.

From Verses 14. 15. OBSERVE,

I. As Adam was a public person, representing all mankind, and undertaking for them; so that his engaging in covenant and his breach were not personal acts, but done by him as a representative and public person: so Jesus Christ who is now come in the flesh is a public person, transacting and acting with the Father, as a common representative of all his own; so that as it was God's good-will and pleasure that the first Adam should engage for, and stand and fall as the head of the family, for the loss or advantage of all the rest; and God transacted and covenanted with him as such a head, and not as a single person, as he might have done; so it was God's good will, that Christ should act as another head of a family, and with him as a head did God make the covenant of grace, so that his standing should redound to many: for thus Adam is called *the type of him who was to come*, that is of Christ.

II. It is a remarkable token of God's great and wonderful grace, that we should read the way of our deliver and salvation in the way of our ruin and destruction,

and the certainty of the one in the certainty of the other: for as in Adam who was a public person, we may see the way of our perdition; so hereby we see, that our salvation must be by one, even Christ, a public person also: for this cause the first Adam is said to have been *a type of the Second*.

III. Tho' man at the beginning, when first created, was highly in favour with God, and advanced to great dignity and honour; yet by his transgressing of the covenant, he fell from that excellent state: hence his sin is here called *an offence or fall*, as the word imports, signifying *falling occasioned through stumbling; not as the offence*.

IV. Whatever blessing or privilege we enjoy in and thro' Christ, all is of free and undeserved grace: and however Christ paid dear for any thing we get, yet to us it is a free gift and so that which is here opposed to the fall of Adam, is here called *the free gift*.

V. Adam by his fall not only broke his own neck, but the neck of many more, and put his posterity into a state of death and damnation; the covenant runing thus, *Thou* (that is, thou, as now engaging for all thy posterity) *shalt die that day thou eatest: so, through the offence of one many are dead*.

VI. Jesus Christ the only Son of God, is true and real man, being like us in all things except sin and is the head of a family, and the root of an excellent planting, and therefore is called here *one man*, as opposed to the first Adam, who was also one man.

VII. As Christ Jesus is a happy root in himself, having *the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily*. Col. ii. 9. and *all fulness*, Col. i. 19.; so is he communicative of this his fulness, and diffuseth it unto many branches that grow in him: for that which comes by *one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many*.

VIII. That which this noble head of the

the family communiceth unto the rest, is far different from that which the first Adam did communicate unto his family; for whereas death was all the portion which the first Adam did bestow, the Second Adam procureth the free grace and favour of God, and all the fruits and effects that flow therefrom: *grace, and the gift by grace, comes to us by that one man Jesus Christ.*

IX. The favour and good-will of God, and all the fruits and effects thereof which believers meet with, are all purchased to them in and by Christ, and all flow down to them in and thro' him: *grace, and the gift by grace, is by that one man,* and without him there is none of God's favour, nor any benefit therefrom, which any can meet with.

X. The doleful and lamentable condition which we have certainly fallen into by our forefather Adam, may ascertain all believers in Christ, that they shall certainly enjoy God's favour and all the fruits thereof, knowing that he is more able to communicate sap unto his branches than Adam was, he being stronger than Adam, and bestowing grace which is stronger than nature: for there is here a *much more; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace---bath abounded unto many.*

From verse 16. OBSERVE,

I. Though Adam had committed many more offences than one, yet it was by that first only, whereby he broke the covenant which God entered into with him, which was imputed unto his posterity, and whereby they were accounted guilty before God, the rest of his transgressions being personal, this was the fault and sin of the whole nature and species: for it is said, *judgment (or the guilt) was by one, viz. offence.*

II. As by this one transgression of Adam, guilt did lie upon all his posterity; so were they all unavoidably liable to the sentence of the law and condemnation; and this is all to which we are served heirs by

our first parents, viz. sin and condemnation for sin; *the judgment was by one to condemnation.*

III. There was no way imaginable how any of the lost and condemned race of mankind could be freed therefrom but by the Second Adam; and in and thro' him it is that they are freed from the sentence of the law, and of condemnation which lay upon them: there is no absolution or justification but in and thro' the righteousness of Christ, which is this free gift; *the free gift is---unto justification.*

IV. Justification is not the infusing of righteousness in us, but an act of God's free grace, whereby we are pronounced free of guilt, in so far as not to see condemnation, or meet with the execution of the sentence of the law which is violated: for *justification* is here opposed to *condemnation*.

V. As believers, beside the guilt of Adam's transgression, have contracted much guilt by their daily out-breakings; so in justification they have pardon not only of that one offence of Adam's, but also of all their other iniquities, whereof they are guilty: therefore it is said, *the free gift is of many offences to justification.*

VI. This should serve much to hold forth and convince us of the transcendent excellency of this Second Adam, in conveying what is his to all his own, beyond the first; while as the First makes all his posterity liable to condemnation for one transgression, and the Second delivereth, not only from that, but all other sins whatsoever; his blood is not only able to cleanse us from that one original sin, but also from all other actual transgressions, 1 John i. 7.

From Verse 17. OBSERVE,

I. By nature all are liable to death's dominion, and may in justice expect no other than to be separated from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power for ever, and so meet with death

in both ſoul and body, and that for evermore: *by one man's offence death reigned.* See Eph. ii. 2. 3. 12. Tit. iii. 3.

II. The children of the family whereof Chriſt is head are delivered from that ſtate of death, and ſhall never be deſtroyed in their ſouls for ever, and bodily death ſhall never harm them at all; they win *to life by one, Jeſus Chriſt.*

III. The life which the children of Chriſt win to thro' him, in grace here, and glory hereafter, is a noble royal life, tho' fools in a world do much undervalue the ſame; and the change which they meet with is great, for whereas before they were ſlaves, and ſlaves to the worſt of tyrants, even to ſin and Satan, now they *reign in life.*

IV. Before any can win to this excellent Kingly life, and to reign in grace and glory, there muſt be a righteouſneſs had, for the Lord will not dwell with the unrighteous, and ſinners will not ſtand in his ſight, for he abhorreth all the workers of iniquity: it is only ſuch as have *the gift of righteouſneſs that ſhall reign.*

V. This righteouſneſs which muſt be had ere we can be brought out of the woeful ſtate wherein we are by nature, is none of our own, nor none of our own purchaſe; it muſt come from ſome other aſſiſtance than from ourſelves, and is the free gift of God, and is therefore called, *the gift of righteouſneſs.*

VI. There are none delivered from this natural ſtate of ſin and death, and brought into a ſtate of ſalvation, until once they be made partakers of the grace of God, and of his gift of righteouſneſs, and that is by faith alone; for faith only lays hold on this offered gift of righteouſneſs, and puts it on; and this is the only way carved out by God for this effect: *they that receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life.*

VII. All thoſe who are truly in Chriſt as branches, and do actually ſuck ſap from him for life, and to whom as a head he

communicateth influences, and actually beſtoweth the fruits of his death and mediation, are only ſuch as receive him and his righteouſneſs by faith; and ſo the benefits of his death redound not to all and every individual perſon, nor did he repreſent them all, but only ſuch as were in time to receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteouſneſs: therefore it is ſaid, *They which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt.*

VIII. Whatever doubts and difficulties poor believers may meet with, and however they may be long wreſtling with fears of never reaching the crown; yet all ſuch as have indeed laid hold on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt by faith, and received that gift, ſhall certainly enjoy communion with Chriſt in glory, and be ſaved for ever; and the certainty of their loſt eſtate by Adam may put it out of all queſtion: therefore ſays he, *much more they who receive abundance of grace, ſhall reign in life, &c.*

IX. As Chriſt is a moſt rich treaſure and ſtore-houſe of all neceſſaries for his own, and is an inexhauſtible fountain unto his own; ſo doth he communicate of his fulneſs, and that very liberally and abundantly; ſo that believers may blame themſelves if they want: ſo they are ſaid *to receive the abundance of grace.*

VERSES 18. 19. *Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men unto juſtification of life.*

For as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners: ſo by the obedience of one, ſhall many be made righteous.

HAVING thus cleared the difference betwixt the two heads of families, he comes now more plainly to hold forth the comparison, and thereby to clear the doubt which might ariſe from his doctrine of juſtification, viz. How could it be, that by

by one man's righteousness so many should be justified and accounted righteous, thus: By one man's righteousness many may be accounted righteous, justified, and adjudged to life, as well, as by one man's sin and disobedience many were accounted guilty and adjudged to condemnation, being sinners: *Therefore, says he, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life:* that is, as by Adam's transgression all his posterity lay under the sentence of death, and were condemned by law; so by the righteousness of Christ all his are justified, and declared heirs of life eternal. And for the further confirmation of this, he sheweth the ground of both, verse 19. as if he were answering this doubt, How could either one man's fault make others liable to condemnation, or one man's righteousness procure heaven and happiness to others? He answers both, and so confirmeth the comparison; saying, *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;* that is, as by Adam's guilt, which was disobedience, many were accounted sinners, having the same sin imputed to them, and so legally constituted transgressors; *so by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous;* that is, so by the righteousness of Christ, which was had by his acts of obedience, not only in suffering but in doing, many are clothed with righteousness and put into a righteous state, and shall be in all time coming. Christ's righteousness being always effectual for this end; and therefore the verb is put into the future time. The strength of the argument lieth here, As all sinners are liable to condemnation, so all righteous persons are to enjoy life. The only doubt to be cleared here, is anent these *all* mentioned, verse 18. *the free gift came upon all men;* whether this be meant of every individual person without exception or not? for answer whereunto, we think it clear, that *all* is

not to be so universally taken, but with a restriction thus; all the men that are in Christ as members, and to whom he is a head; or all these who are his, whatever condition or quality they be of else. And this is clear, 1st, From the scope, which is, as we shewed, to clear how any can be justified by the righteousness of another; but if we take all men, for all and every individual person without any limitation or exception, the apostle's similitude should come far short; yea, it should be no similitude at all: For, 1. Adam's sin was really imputed unto his posterity; so that hence they are called and constituted sinners in God's account, not only for the original pravity which all have naturally, as flowing from that guilt, but even for the very breach of the covenant which Adam committed; and upon this they were really under God's curse and the sentence of condemnation, and liable to the fire of hell: but all men have not the righteousness of Christ imputed to them in such sort as they may be called righteous, and are really justified, and have real and undoubted right to happiness and life eternal, as none can deny. Now, if the comparison agree not in this, it agreeth in nothing; For, 2. this is the main thing, *viz.* That as Adam was a public person and representative, and so his deed, who was but one man, wronged many; so Christ a Second Adam, (whereof the first was a type) is called one man also, to shew that he was to be looked on as a public person; and so his deed helped many: and if we take not up Christ as a head, representative, or a public person, we shall never make sense of the apostle's arguing here; now sure I am, he cannot be looked on as a head but to his members, nor as a root but to branches, nor as a common person but for such only for whom he undertook, and whom he represented; and this I am sure cannot be meant of all and every one in particular, without exception. 2^{dly}, I crosseth the text also many ways; For, 1

the apostle says, verses 15. and 17. that Christ is more able to communicate good than Adam was to communicate evil; and therefore he addeth a *much more*; but if this were true, the first Adam should have been strongest; for thro' the first Adam all that were his, were really in a dead condition, and death reigned over them, none excepted; but all mankind do not really receive the grace of God, and the gift by grace, but many notwithstanding of all that Christ did, perish, and are never delivered from under the dominion of death; and so the Second Adam should have been weakest. 2. These *all men* have the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is Christ's righteousness and what floweth therefrom, *abounding unto them*, verse 15.; but all and every man hath not this. 3. These *all men* have received the *free gift unto justification*, verse 16.; but all and every man shall never be justified. 4. These *all men* have received the free gift unto justification of *many offences*, verse 16. and so not only get original sin pardoned, but all their actual sins also, and that at once; for we hear not of two distinct justifications, one whereby original sin is only pardoned, (which with some is a benefit common to all) and another whereby their actual sins are forgiven; but this cannot agree to all and every man. 5. Those *all men* receive *abundance of grace*, verse 17.; but I am sure, all men whatsoever have not faith, and so never received grace, even though offered; and so grace was never bestowed on all. 6. Those *all men* receive also the *gift of righteousness*, verse 17. and all men whatsoever are not, nor never shall be, clothed with the righteousness of Christ. 7. Those *all men* shall *reign in life*, and receive justification of life, verses 17. 18. and that no less certainly and infallibly, than the first Adam's posterity were really and undeclinably under the power of death and sentence of condemnation; but this I hope will not agree to all and every indi-

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vidual person. So then these *all men* must be Christ's spiritual heirs and seed, and all of these not one excepted.

From verse 18. OBSERVE.

I. As Adam's sin was really imputed unto all his carnal posterity, so as we are not only made sinful, but sinners thereby, and there is special mention made of one particular act of iniquity, and that one so imputed as thereby they are made liable to condemnation; so the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed unto us, and made ours, so that we are thereby accounted righteous: for it is said, *as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, &c.*

II. The righteousness by which we are accepted of God, and justified before him, is not a righteousness of our own, but the righteousness of our head and husband: *even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification.*

III. This righteousness of Christ being the *righteousness of God*, Rom. i. 17. and x. 3. 2 Cor. v. 21. is able to cover all his own, and to do all their turns sufficiently, so that none shall lack: *by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men.*

IV. Tho' Christ's death and sufferings were a ransom sufficient to satisfy justice for the sins of the elect; yet could not they have inherited life eternal, if they had not been clothed with a complete robe of righteousness, seeing the law said, *Do this, and live*: for it is said here, that *by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all to justification of life.*

From verse 19. OBSERVE,

I. By Adam's transgression of the law of God, his posterity not only contracted a vicious nature and disposition, so that they were prone to all wickedness whatsoever, but were really engaged in guilt, and made formally sinners before God, as if they had broken the law themselves:

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therefore it is said, *by one man's disobedience many were made sinners.*

II. Tho' Christ in respect of his divine nature was equal with the Father, and could not, without a contradiction, be said to obey; yet in respect of his human nature, which had not an infinite essential holiness, Matth. xix. 17. he may be said to obey; and while he was in the flesh, Heb. v. 7. did actually subject himself to the law, and gave practical obedience both to the moral and ceremonial law, Phil. ii. 8. Matth. v. 7. and therein as in all other duties laid on him by the Father, as our Mediator and Cautioner, John xv. 10. Psal. xl. 7. 8. 9.; therefore we hear *of the obedience of one.*

III. As Christ was not made man for himself, but took upon him our nature for our good; so neither was he under the law, and yielded obedience thereto for himself, as if simply and absolutely he had been obliged by the law, as a creature, but all his obedience was for us, as he was born for us, Isa. ix. 6. so was he made under the law for us, Gal. iv. 4. 5.: for here his obedience is useful for us, not only for imitation, but also to constitute us righteous; *by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

IV. Howbeit believers have no inherent qualitative righteousness of their own, that is sufficient to clothe them in the sight of God, their best righteousness being but rotten raggs; yet are they legally constituted righteous, really and in truth before God, and so have some righteousness upon them: for here it is said, *many are made righteous.*

V. It is not by any thing in them, or done by themselves, that believers are legally accounted righteous; but only by the obedience of Jesus Christ, not only that which shined eminently in his death, but also which appeared thro' his whole life, so that in his obeying we are accounted obeying, and his obedience is accounted ours; hence he is said to fulfil the law for

us, Matth. v. 17. 18. Rom. viii. 3. and x. 3. Gal. iv. 4. 5. and we are said to be made righteous in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. he is called *our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. and xxxiii. 16. 1 Cor. 1. 30.: for here it is said, that *by the obedience of one, many are made righteous.*

VI. The efficacy and influence of Christ's obedience will not be soon drawn out, but will be of force to all believers, and effectual for their use in all time coming, thro' all generations to the end of the world; therefore the time is changed here, for the comfort of believers in all time coming, and instead of saying, *by one man's obedience many were or are made righteous*, he says, *many shall be made righteous.*

VERSES 20. 21. *Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

HAVING thus cleared and illustrated the doctrine of justification by comparing the two Adams together, the apostle further proceeds in clearing the same doctrine, by answering some objections, which men of corrupt minds would be ready to make against it. And the first objection is here preoccupied, and it may be thus taken up, If we be justified by faith, without the works of the law, why then did God give a law? what use was there thereof? seeing we are not justified thereby, it would seem that the law were needless altogether; but it is not so, therefore your doctrine is false. The occasion of this objection may arise also from verse 13. where he said, that *until the law sin was in the world*; and hence they might say, If so, why did the law enter? To this objection he answereth in these two verses; 1. By shewing how the law entered: and 2.

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The ends wherefore the law entered. 1. How the law entered; the word properly ſignifies, *intervened*, and ſo he would ſay, the law came in after the promiſe, and intervened betwixt that promiſe and the clear goſpel; and this ſays, that the promiſe ſtands in full force, and ſo the way of juſtification by the free promiſe is not diſannulled by the law; thus, this ſame apoſtle reaſoneth, Gal. iii. 17. *And this I ſay, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect.* And ſo there is but one way of juſtification, viz. by faith, in all ages; both before the law, in the time of the law, and after the law, the way is ſtill one and the ſame, and the law intervened, or came in, in the miſt, for holy ends; all this is imported in that the law is ſaid to have entered, or *intervened*, and ſo it could not wrong the good old way. Then 2. he ſhews ſome ends why the Lord made the law to enter; (for he mentions no more than what maketh for his preſent purpoſe) and (1.) *The law entered, that the offence might abound*; that is, until the law came, ſin lay in the dark, and was not well taken notice of; men were guilty of many things which they did not underſtand to be ſin, until the law came, which as a glaſs diſcovered many foul ſpots which the dim light of nature would never have manifested; and ſo by the law was the knowledge of ſin, and hereby ſin abounded, more of them being made known than formerly; next, ſin abounded by the law, in that after the promulgation of the law, diſobedience did argue great contempt of the Law-giver, and ſo did diſcover great perverſeneſs and ſtubbornneſs which would not have kythed before; yea moreover ſin abounded by the coming of the law, in that thereby the ſtrength of inward corruption was diſcovered, in that it broke out with the greater force, the more it was curbed and reſtrain-

ed by a law; and thus the law came that ſin might abound, and men might ſee their own vileneſs and baſeneſs the more, and ſo might be more willing to go out of themſelves, and look for righteouſneſs elſewhere. (2.) *But where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound*; This is another end, and ſo propoſed, as it may be comfortable unto ſuch as were troubled with the abounding of ſin: that is, the law entered, that ſin being diſcovered, and thereby the grace of God in the goſpel, pardoning, might appear to be great and wonderful, and to abound much more, yea, to abound more than can be expreſſed, in that it drowns quite up the whole deluge of ſin, however abounding and ſwelling. (3.) This laſt remote end is more illuſtrated, verſe 21. *That as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; that is, as ſin hath aſſed the part of a tyrant, and domineered ſo as to manifeſt its force and power in killing and deſtroying condemned ſouls; for *the ſting of death is ſin*, and death could have no power over a man but becauſe of ſin, and ſo ſin reigneth; ſo the free grace of the goſpel, or of God in the goſpel, might reign alſo, that is, appear more ſtrong and excellent, in ſubduing and abolishing ſin the former tyrant, and bring in eternal life; but how? *through righteouſneſs*; but whoſe righteouſneſs? *by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; not our own, but his who is our Lord and Saviour: Now he ſays, *ſin reigned*, in the præterite time, not as it were not yet reigning in the reprobate, but to ſhew, that ſo ſoon as the grace of God in Chriſt begins to ſhine upon a ſoul, then the dominion of ſin and death ceaſeth, and not until then.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It ſerveth not a little to illuſtrate and clear the truth, to ſhew the groundleſſneſs of what objections adverſaries thereunto may make againſt the ſame, and therefore ſuch

such as hold forth truth to others, would be careful to forecast and obviate what any can say against the truth, and solidly to refute the same, after the example of Paul here, who says, *the law entered*, &c. and therein is answering a great objection against his doctrine.

II. Men of corrupt principles, and blinded with prejudice and error, are ready to look upon every ordinance of God, and every dispensation as altogether useless and unprofitable, if it be not for the promoting of their fancied ends; as those here were ready to think the law was given to no purpose, if men were not justified thereby, but behoved to look somewhere else for righteousness: for this is the objection, If we be justified by the righteousness of Christ, and not by the law, then the law is altogether useless; wherefore was it given? Gal. iii. 19. --- *It was added because of transgressions.*

III. Howbeit the only wise God, for his own glory, and other holy ends, thought fit that the covenant of grace (the only way of winning to heaven, since the fall) should be held forth and administered under different dispensations, and not always after one and the same manner, upon which score we hear of an *old* and of a *new* covenant, Heb. viii. 13. and of the *first* and *second*, Heb. viii. 7.; yet it was still one and the same for substance, in all ages, both before and after the law, and before and after Christ; and since the fall the law or covenant of works was never the way: for *the law only entered*, or *intervened*, and *came in* (as it were) *in the midst*, for other ends.

IV. Tho' even under the law, there was no other covenant by which justification and salvation was had, but the covenant of grace; yet its administration was then more legal-like than now, the promises being held forth sparingly and darkly, and the curses more frequently and clearly, and the church then being under a yoke of ceremonies; and thus *the law* is said to have *entered*, and so seemed to be some

distinct thing; and by law he doth not mean the moral law which was still in the church, but only the legal external dispensation of the covenant of grace.

V. Albeit the law of nature which was written in the hearts of people, even before Moses's days, and God's judgments against transgressors, and other things, might then have served, in some measure, to have discovered sin and iniquity; yet sin and wickedness was more fully discovered when the law was promulgated on mount Sinai, and the more fully and thoroughly the law be held forth and studied, sin will appear more in its own colours: *the law entered that sin might abound.*

VI. The Lord's end in promulgating the law upon Mount Sinai, was not to establish a covenant of works, or proclaim justification by the works of the law, however for the further humbling of these stiff-necked people, there was many a sad and heavy curse added, and it was published in such a terrible manner, with fire and thundering, as if it had smelled of no gospel at all; but to convince those self-conceit people of their need of a cautioner, and so to humble those proud justiciaries, who would rest upon their own works: *the law entered that sin might abound.*

VII. Men are so blinded with self-love, that they will never perceive their own spots and filthiness, nor be thoroughly acquainted with their wicked, perverse, abominable and rebellious hearts, until the law be cleared, and they see themselves distinctly in it; conviction of folks necessity of a Mediator will never be purpose-like, untill the law be clearly born in upon the conscience: *the law entered that sin might abound.*

VIII. The more a man be acquainted with himself, and see the numberless number of his abominations, the stubbornness of his own heart, and the vast gulf and sink of all mischief in himself, the more high thoughts will he have of the free and matchless grace of God, in coming over

ever ſo many mountains, and pardoning ſuch a multitude of tranſgreſſions, iniquities and ſins, and waſhing and purging ſuch a naſtily, filthy, abominable heart: *where ſin abounded grace did much more abound.*

IX. How hainous and how numerous ſoever a man's iniquities be, he needs not deſpair, or think that they could overcome the grace and mercy of God; but if he will welcome the offers of a Mediator in the covenant of grace, he may be ſure that there is a ſuper-abundance (to ſpeak ſo) in grace: *where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

X. The Lord has ſo contrived the buſineſs of ſalvation in the covenant of grace, as that his wonderful, free and efficacious grace, and matchleſs love might gloriouſly ſhine forth; and for this cauſe he will have the ordinary way of bringing ſinners in within the covenant, to be by conviction, and making them ſenſible of their loſt condition in themſelves, and of an impoſſibility of ever being juſtified or ſaved for any thing in themſelves, becauſe of the multitude of their tranſgreſſions: therefore ſays he, *where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound, and that it might be ſo, therefore the law entered.*

From verſe 21. OBSERVE,

I. As ſin and corruption hath a kingly power and authority within an unrenewed man, drawing him away to ſinful acts; ſo has it a tyrannical force, dragging them away to death, and the place of execution: *ſin reigns unto death.*

II. All the tyranny, force and power which death hath over any, floweth from ſin, ſin being the ſting thereof, and giving it power and authority over the guilty man: for where he ſaid before, *death reigned*, now he ſays, *ſin reigned unto death.*

III. The more we be convinced of the greameſs of our ſlavery under ſin, being bound hand and foot over unto death, ſo that we cannot eſcape, if we get not help;

the more will the power of God's grace kyth in delivering us, in breaking the bars of death, and ſetting us free from the ſlavery of ſin, and tyranny of death becauſe of ſin; *that as ſin hath reigned, even ſo grace might reign.*

IV. Howbeit there be many and ſtrong difficulties in a believer's way towards heaven, which may make him afraid that he ſhall never reach the crown, but ſhoot ſhort thereof; yet God's matchleſs love and wonderful free grace and favour is ſo powerful and efficacious, as they ſhall certainly inherit life, and win to the end of their journey; grace is able to carry them over all impediments whatſoever, it hath a ſuper-eminent and tranſcendent power and efficacy for that end: therefore *grace is ſaid to reign unto life.*

V. As the condition of ſuch as are now in Chriſt is excellent, being in favour with God, and enjoying his good-will, and living under the warm rays of his love; ſo that which they ſhall be advanced to afterward, is a condition full of all bleſſedneſs, contentment, and all things deſirable, yea, and endleſs too; it is a *life*, and a life that ſhall never have an end, and hence called *eternal*; *even ſo might grace reign unto eternal life.*

VI. There is no inheriting of life eternal, until firſt we be covered with a righteouſneſs, ſeeing we are altogether unclean and unholy of ourſelves; and as grace certainly carries us to heaven, ſo grace certainly provides the means, and the way how to win to it, and finds out a way how poor ſinners ſhall become righteous ſaints; yea, and is excellent and glorious in every ſtep of the way: *ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life*; grace reigns both as to the means and to the end.

VII. The righteouſneſs which grace hath provided, and is the way by which it carries believers to the poſſeſſion of eternal life, is no righteouſneſs of our own, but the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and here-

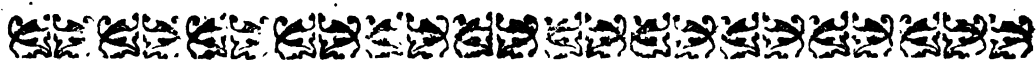
in grace reigns, or shines forth, in providing such a righteousness as his: therefore it is added, *by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

VIII. This Mediator, whose righteousness must be had ere we can win to glory, must be closed with by faith; and a gracious soul can never once name Jesus Christ, and consider him as doing any thing of the work of redemption, for poor sinners, but their affections must warm within them, and their souls must clasp about him, in love and faith: therefore says he, *Jesus Christ our Lord.*

IX. Whosoever resolveth to be carried by grace to heaven, must resolve to take Christ not only as a mediator and cau-

tioner, or priest, but also they must take him as a king and commander, under whom they must walk with all submission; and whose yoke they must take on: therefore says he, *so grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

X. There being but two captains, sin and grace, all are either under the one, or under the other; and even God's elect are under sin till grace make a change; and when they are once under the dominion of grace, they are no more under the slavery of sin unto death: therefore it is said, *as death hath reigned, in the bygone time, so grace might reign.*



CHAPTER VI.

IN this chapter the apostle illustrateth the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, by shewing, how it is so far from being an enemy unto holiness and sanctification, that on the contrary it has sanctification inseparably annexed to it, and they go always together. And this he doth, 1. By confuting an objection, which seemed to make out, that this doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, was a fosterer of wickedness, and loosed the reins to all lasciviousness, to verse 12. 2. And from thence to the end, he presseth the duty of holiness, as a native duty flowing from their state of justification, and as most suitable for them that are justified by faith in Christ.

VERSES 1. 2. *What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

God forbid:----

A Second objection is here proposed, which seemeth to have its rise from that which the apostle had said in the last chapter, verse 20. *viz. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;* hence some would be ready to object, and say, If it be so, that where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound, then the best way for us to exalt grace, and make it to shine, is to continue and abide in sin; and so your doctrine of justification by faith, which, you say, tends so much to exalt grace, is a doctrine which casts folk loose to sin, and encourageth them thereto: But this is most absurd; Therefore your doctrine is false; and it is false, that thereby grace is exalted. This objection is couched up in a question, *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* To which he answereth, by denying the same with abhorrence and detestation, saying, *God forbid;* what an absurd inference is this,

this, and groundless? I never said so, nor any thing that might give any just ground for such a conclusion. And the reasons of his denial he giveth in the following verses.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Men of corrupt minds, who are filled with prejudice against any truth, cannot be soon satisfied with any answer that is made to any of the grounds of their stumbling, and gained to the truth; but the more that is said to satisfy them, they will have the more skill to reply: as here, one objection is raised out of the answering of another, *What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin? &c.*

II. It is no new thing to see men rise up against the true doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of another, and to upbraid the maintainers thereof, as teaching doctrine tending to looseness and profanity: for here Paul saw it would be objected, *shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

III. Erroneous persons, where prejudice sets them on work, to carp at, and except against any thing that is said, either for the confirmation of truth, or the answering of the grounds of their mistake, are ready to look a-squint upon what is said, and fortify their first mistake by still mistaking, and turning away what they hear; as here they wrested Paul's sense, when he said, Chap. v. 20. *That where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;* and supposed him to mean, that the abounding of sin was indeed the native cause of the super-abounding of grace; while as it was only an occasion, and an occasion by the goodness of God, who brings good things out of evil, and that only in some few chosen ones, and not in all; and again the apostle speaks of the sense of sin mainly, and that of sins committed before, and not of these committed after conversion: *what shall we say then? shall we continue in sin? &c.*

IV. The doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, is no doctrine giving way to men and women, to follow their lusts, whatever malicious opposers say; nor should any give way to their own corruption, under whatsoever pretext of magnifying God's grace: for the apostle denieth their alledgeance, saying, *God forbid.*

V. Souls that are truly tender, will be much affected, when they hear any thing spoken to foster security and profanity; their hearts will rise at that, especially when it is fathered on truth: The apostle evidenceth great indignation of spirit when he heareth this mentioned, and therefore says, *God forbid.*

VERSES 2. 3. 4. ---*How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?*

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

THE apostle now cometh to give some reasons of his denying the former false inference. And his first argument may be thus taken up: Such as are in such a condition as sin hath no more any tyrannizing power over them, but are delivered from the tyranny of sin and corruption, should not live any more as slaves unto that tyrant: or, such as are loosed from the bondage of sin, and as free from the yoke thereof, as women are from the yoke of their former husbands when dead, should not now entangle themselves, nor will not entangle themselves into the former yoke of bondage. This the apostle proposeth question-ways, as being most clear and undeniable in itself; saying, *How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* But so it is, that all that are believers in Christ, and justified by faith in him,

him, *are dead to sin*; for of such he is now speaking, seeing he includeth himself, saying, *we that are dead to sin*, that is, as they are freed from the condemning power of sin, so are they freed from the enslaving, tyrannizing, and domineering power thereof, under which they were while in black nature, sin has not such power now to lord it over them, and force them to acts of iniquity, and lead them as so many drudges and under-slaves, into the service of sin, being weakened thro' the power of the Spirit of Christ; therefore they cannot, nor will not live unto sin, that is, fulfil the lusts thereof, with full delight and desire, and carry themselves as sworn servants, labouring to promote the interest of corruption and sin in themselves, as wholly devoted thereunto. The assumption, *viz.* That all believers in Christ are dead to sin, he proves, verses 3. 4. thus, They that are buried with Christ unto death, that is, are so united unto Christ, as that they are made partakers of the fruits and efficacy of his death; those are dead to sin: But so it is, that believers who are now justified by faith in Christ, are baptized into Christ's death, and buried with him by baptism into his death; Therefore, &c. The major is confirmed by the apostle's authority; The assumption he doth again confirm thus, They that are baptized into Jesus Christ, are baptized into his death: But believers (or such of us) are baptized into Christ; Therefore, &c. His using the word *baptized* into Christ, and into his death, serves to illustrate, clear and confirm this matter more, *viz.* that believers are both united unto Christ and to his death, and made partakers of his death and burial; because baptism is an ordinance of God, instituted for this end, among others, to seal believers union with Christ, both in his death, burial and resurrection, and communion in the fruits flowing therefrom; and they are baptized, and have now fled into Christ by faith, which is the condition of that

covenant whereof baptism is a seal. So then, to be *baptized into Christ*, is somewhat else than to be baptized in his name, as we hear, Acts ii. 28. for to be baptized in his name, is to dedicate and consecrate ourselves to him by baptism, to profess and avouch ourselves his, in taking his badge and livery: but to be baptized in him, is to be really united unto him; in a relative sense, to be implanted in him, and ingrafted by faith, and thereby made to participate of his influence and virtue, all which is the thing signified, exhibited and sealed by baptism. So to be baptized in his death and burial, or to be buried with him by baptism, is, to be made partakers of the fruits and virtue of Christ's death and burial, as sealed in baptism for mortifying of sin.

This is further cleared from these words, *That as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of his Father even so we also should walk in newness of life*; that is, our being united to Christ in his death and burial, is not for nought, nor is it all that is held forth to us in baptism; but also baptism points forth our union to Christ in his resurrection, and seal-eth to us who have fled in to Christ, the fruits thereof, to wit, renovation of life that, as sure as Christ was raised from the dead by, or unto the glory of his Father that is, by his glorious power, or for the manifestation of his glory; so we who are believers in Christ should have influence of life and virtue communicated to us from Christ our head and root, whereby we should become new creatures, and walk in newness of life.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. However such as are justified through faith in Christ, are not so thoroughly sanctified, as that they shall never be overtaken in sin, seeing the best falleth seven times a-day; yet they are not under the domineering, commanding, and over-ruling power of corruption, as sometime the

have been; it is not now their constant exercise, trade and occupation, to be working the works of Satan, and fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and to follow its motion; they do not commit sin, as wholly sold and devoted thereto, 1 John iii. 9.: Therefore the apostle says, such *cannot live into sin*. But such as are in black nature can do nothing else but sin, it is their life and liking to be occupied in sin, they live in it, and have no other life, whatever flourishes and outward shows of piety and godliness they have.

II. The reason why believers in Christ cannot now follow such a trade of life as formerly they did, is, because they are put into a new state, and have a new nature given them, the seed of God, and of grace, whereby they are now brought out of the territory, and from under the jurisdiction of sin and corruption, as a dead wife is no more under the command of her former husband: Therefore they are said to be *dead unto sin*, while as before they were *dead in sins*, Eph. ii. 1.

III. Such as imagine that justification by the imputed righteousness of another, is a doctrine tending to open a door for licentiousness, do grossly bewray their ignorance of the state and condition of such as are justified by faith, and know not how that they have changed masters, when once they have fled in to Christ, and have now a new nature, and a new principle of life in them, so as they do not walk so licentiously as before: for this is his answer unto their objection, who thought, that then we might sin, that grace might abound, *How can they who are dead unto sin, live any longer therein?* as if he had said, you know not what is the condition of such as are justified, and towards whom grace has abounded; you think they are the same as they were, but they are not so, they are now dead unto sin, it is no more their husband and commander, but they are released from that master by a stronger, and

so are dead to the former; and so they cannot do as you suppose they may or will.

IV. Justification by faith in Christ Jesus thro' the righteousness of Christ imputed, is so far from being an enemy unto holiness and sanctification, that, on the contrary, it is always accompanied therewith; those two, justification and sanctification go in others hands: for such are said to be *dead unto sin, and cannot live thereunto*, and also are said to *walk in newness of life*.

V. This sanctification, renovation, or regeneration, includeth both the rooting out, mortifying and killing of the old man of sin and corruption, and the reviving, quickening and growth of the new man of grace: therefore we hear of their *being dead and buried with Christ*, and also of their rising to *newness of life*.

VI. Tho' corruption in the regenerate be not quite extinct and killed out of hand, but there is still something of it remaining in the best, to their continual exercise; yet it has gotten deadly wounds, and, as it were, is in the dead throws, and is still upon the dying hand, and shall never be able to recover its former strength and vivacity, but like a dead man in his grave, that will not come back: upon this score we are said to be *baptized into his death*; that is to say, our corruption is dying, having gotten its dead stroke; and not only so, but also, *we are buried with him*, and so corruption is rotting away, and shall never revive, and return to its former state and strength.

VII. Tho' we are commanded to mortify our corruptions; yet it is not from any influence from, or strength or efficacy in ourselves, whereby this is brought about, but all alienarily from Christ: therefore *we are baptized into his death, and buried with him into death*.

VIII. There is no partaking of any sap of influences from the Lord Jesus, whereby to get corruptions mortified, and the new man set a-growing, till we become

united unto Christ, and made one with him by faith; for all our communion floweth from union: therefore before we can be baptized into his death, and buried with him by baptism, we must first be baptized into himself; *As many of us as are baptized into Christ, are baptized into his death.*

IX. As believers are really united unto Christ, as members to the head, Eph. iv. 15. the wife to the husband, Eph. v. 32. as branches to the stock, John xv. 4; so from this union there doth necessarily flow communion of life, strength, sap, and a partaking of the fruits and effects of his mediation, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation, both of his death, burial, and resurrection, so that none who ever have fled in to Christ, and are united to him by faith, shall want of these for their necessity and behoof: *as many of us, as are baptized into Christ, are baptized into his death.*

X. Baptism is a sacrament appointed of God, to signify and seal the ingrafting of all believers into Christ, and the certainty of their partaking of the fruits and effects of his mediation, both for the mortifying of corruption, and strengthening the new man of grace; it seals and confirms to all who will believe the promise, and lay hold upon him in whom all the promises are yea and amen, the certainty and undoubted accomplishment of all which is promised in the new covenant: therefore we are said to be *baptized in him, and baptized in his death, and buried with him in baptism, that as he was raised from the dead, we might walk, &c.* See Col. ii. 12. And in particular, baptism doth represent, signify and seal our regeneration in both its parts, both our mortification and vivification; our being under the water represents our mortification, and our coming up again, as it were, our vivification.

XI. Tho' baptism being a seal of the covenant of grace, which is held forth to all within the visible church, be applied to all that are members of the visible church,

and is a sign representing the spiritual thing signified to all; yet it is not a seal of confirmation to all, but only to such as believe and lay hold on Christ; to those, and those only, it seeketh their ingrafting into Christ, and interest in his death and resurrection, for their mortification and vivification: for the apostle is speaking only of such as are justified by fleeing in to Christ, among whom he reckoneth himself one, saying, *As many of us as have been baptized into him, &c.*

XII. As Christ was given of the Father to us and for us, so in all his deportment, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation, he was seeking to promote our good: therefore there is here mention made of his death, burial, and resurrection, and good accruing to us from all of them: *we are baptized in his death, and buried with him, and that as he rose from the dead, so we should walk, &c.*

XIII. As the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath influence in the pardoning of our sins, and justification; so hath it influence also in the killing of sin, and delivering of his own from the power of it in sanctification, he being a common person in all he did: therefore it is said, *that like as he was raised from the dead, so we might walk in newness of life.*

XIV. Tho' Christ did really die, being in our stead, and undergoing in our name, the death we were lying under, and therefore was buried; yet could he not see corruption, nor be holden down by the bars of death, Psal. xvi. 10. Acts ii. 24. 31. and xiii. 34. 35. 36. but rose again: for we hear of his *death, burial, and of his resurrection; like as he was raised.*

XV. The resurrection of Christ being caused by the mighty power of Jehovah, did much tend to the glory of God in his attributes, power, justice, goodness, and mercy: he was *raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, or, to the glory of the Father.*

XVI. All that have fled in to Christ by faith,

faith, being thereby made partakers of the fruits and effects of his resurrection, are brought out of the old state of death, under sin's tyranny and dominion, and are renewed, having a new life, new principles, new operations, new designs, and new fruits, all things are now new, 2 Cor. v. 17.: *As Christ was raised from the dead, so they walk in newness of life.*

XVII. This life which believers in Christ have gotten through quickening influence from him, is not an idle, fruitless life, without fruits of holiness, but an active stirring principle, setting folk on work constantly, and in this life believers can never win to perfection, but are still advancing and growing in grace: therefore *they walk in newness of life*, and so all their doings now, after grace is living at their heart roots, smell of life, and flow from life, except when temptation and corruption is swaying them downward, and God's restraining and strengthening grace is withdrawn.

VERSE 5. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death: we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*

IN this verse the apostle confirmeth what he had said last, to wit, that from his resurrection we receive virtue and strength to live unto holiness, and to walk in newness of life; saying, *For if we have been planted together*, &c. His reason is this, If we have been so nearly united unto Christ, as that we have been planted with him in the likeness of his death, we must also be planted with him in the likeness of his resurrection; that is, (to speak it more plainly thus) if believers be so closely united unto Christ, as that they have been imp'd into him, (like an imp joined to an old stock, so as to die in the winter-time with the stock) and so made partakers of his death; so we shall also be made partakers of his life, as an imp or scion revives again in the Spring

when the stock reviveth. If we have been planted together, or so joined with Christ, as a scion to the stock, in the likeness of his death, as to partake of the fruits of his death to our mortification, (which is the only death he is speaking of here, as to us, and therefore calls it a *likeness with Christ's death*) so also in the likeness of his resurrection; that is, so also being imp'd in him, we shall be made partakers of his resurrection, and of the fruits thereof to our vivification; for he is only speaking of our regeneration, and not resurrection after this life, and therefore useth again, *likeness of his resurrection*.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Though naturally we be branches of a wild olive, and of a dead rotten stock; yet Christ is content to have us united unto him, that we may partake of his sap and furniture, and so grow up in him; for we are planted with him and imp'd in him. See John xv. 5.

II. Sinners having now laid hold on Christ by faith, are nearly joined unto him, and made one plant (as it were) with him: to point forth this close and wonderful union, this and several other similitudes are used by the Spirit of the Lord, *we are planted with him*, or imp'd in him.

III. Until this marriage-knot be made by faith, we cannot partake of any sap, virtue and life of Jesus Christ; as a branch can partake nothing of the sap and greenness of the stock, till it be united to it by imping: *we are planted with him in his death and resurrection*.

IV. When once a soul closeth with Christ by faith, and depends upon him with singleness of heart, then they live in him, and by virtue of his resurrection, are enabled to bring forth fruits of holiness unto God, and to grow in grace; thus are they *planted in the likeness of his resurrection*.

V. The participating of the fruits of Christ's death thro' faith in him, to the taking away of the condemning power of

sin, and also to the mortifying of the deeds of the body, and weakening of corruption, may assure us that likewise thro' faith in him, we shall be enabled to advance in conformity to God's image, and to rise more unto holiness and sanctification of the Spirit. If we partake of sap from Christ for one end, we shall also partake of sap for another end, till we be compleated in him, and bring forth fruit abundantly: *For if we have been plant'd together, in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*

VERSES 6. 7. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

For he that is dead, is freed from sin.

ANother argument is here laid down to prove that such as are justified, having now fled in to Christ by faith, are not let loose unto profanity and wickedness, but that their state of justification speaks them to be in another condition now, and greater friends to holiness, for it is a known and certain principle and axiom in religion; *Knowing*, says he, *this, that our old man is crucified with Christ*; that is, that when Christ our cautioner, head, and common person, was nailed to the cross, not only was justice satisfied as to our guiltiness, but *our old man*, as to its power and efficacy, got its deaths wounds; when Christ a common person, in our name, was crucified, in him, our natural corruption (which is that which we got of old Adam, and which is old in regard of the new man of grace) *was crucified with him, and so the body of sin* (the same with the old man, but so called to point forth the combination of corruption in us, even corruption in its strength, having all its members as a complete entire body) *was utterly destroyed, broken, and undone*, in that he did meritoriously procure the same, yea, and engage for the same, and did more as our head and cautioner,

and all to this end, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, and serve this sinful body and corruption within us. In short, his argument is this, If that old vicious, corrupted nature of believers is killed and utterly abolished in Christ's being crucified; then believers are no more in such a condition, as to be servants and slaves to corruption: But the former is a known (or at least should be a known) axiom.

The connection of the major he confirmeth in the next words, verse 7: *For he that is dead, is freed from sin*: In saying, *he that is dead*, it is as much as if he had said, He that has the body of sin and corruption crucified in him, it is dead to him; and that is all one as if he were dead to it: (the living woman is loosed from the law of her dead husband; as well as the dead woman is loosed from the power of the living husband;) and so he that is dead is freed from sin. In the original it is, *He is justified from sin*; that is, loosed from any obligation which sin can have on him; the accusation of sin is loosed, and its power also is lost; and so he is every way free from it, being absolved by the sentence of the Judge.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Albeit the natural corruption and original sin with which we are bound, be not a substance, as some do falsely gather from these expressions, *viz.* that it is called *a body*, and *a man*, which are but metaphorical, and not properly to be understood: yet it is strong, vigorous, and weighty, and, as it were, complete and full: It is, as it were, *a man*, to shew its strength; and *a body*, to shew its completeness, having members and parts making up the whole: so it is called *the old man*, and *the body of sin*.

II. This corruption and contagion wherewith all are infected, was had thro' Adam, and is that which we all are born with, and which, in the godly, is wearing to its grave; for these causes it is called *the old man*.

III. As

III. As this natural and original corruption is complete and full; wanting nothing to make it moſt vile and abominable; ſo it is the fountain and well-ſpring of all wickedneſs and miſchief: it is the ſeed of all ſin, and cauſeth every thing which is evil, and nothing but what is evil. It is *a body of ſin*, wanting no member, and having every member ſinful, working nothing but ſin and iniquity; it is *a body of ſin*.

IV. While Jeſus Chriſt, Mediator between God and man; ſtood in the room of all the elect ones, and having their iniquities imputed to him, and met together on his back, offered up himſelf upon the croſs a ſacrifice to ſatisfy the juſtice of God, this natural guilt of ours, this body of ſin got a deadly blow; for juſtice being ſatisfied, it was made powerleſs and unable to condemn ſuch as he repreſented, or was a public perſon for; or to enſlave them ſtill; it was *crucified with him*, and ſo loſt both its condemning power, and its domineering power.

V. Howbeit this natural corruption of ours was imputed to Chriſt, (who was in himſelf without all ſin) and he fully ſatisfied juſtice for it, and others; yet was it not actually and completely taken away, ſo as it ſhould be no more, but only meritoriouſly, and in our Head and Huſband, or common perſon: for howbeit it was crucified with Chriſt; yet it was *to be deſtroyed* afterward; therefore ſays he, *that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed.*

VI. Believers, who have gotten an union made up with Chriſt, may reſt aſſured, that, ſeeing Chriſt was a public perſon while hanging on the croſs, acting for them, and in their name ſatisfying juſtice for their guiltineſs, and undertaking for their thorough ſanctification, and meriting their full and final redemption, their natural corruption, for as ſtrong and powerful as it is in its members and parts, ſhall at length in due time, be utterly deſtroyed and broken: *Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of death might be deſtroyed.*

VII. Albeit this deſtruction which abideth the body of ſin be not had ſo long as we are on this ſide of time, but only expected, and certainly looked for in end; yet it is ſo far attained, that tho' this body of ſin ſtill abide, to keep the godly in exerciſe, it is ſo far broken in the juſtified, as that it has not full power and dominion over them, as ſometime it has had; they are now no more ſervants thereto, its motions and deſires are not ſo readily obeyed and yielded unto as formerly: *That henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.*

VIII. All unrenewed and unregenerate perſons, however, and from whatſoever principle, they abſtain from many external acts of iniquity; yet till they be united to Chriſt by faith, and have gotten a new nature and diſpoſition, they are but mere ſlaves unto a body of death and ſin within them: therefore ſays he, *That henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin*; which ſuppoſeth that before they did ſerve ſin.

IX. This begun deliverance from, and deſtruction of the power and tyranny of the body of ſin, is a fruit and effect of Chriſt's death; then did he procure the ſame by his merits: *The old man was crucified with him, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve him.*

X. The ignorance of this relation betwixt Chriſt and believers, and how Chriſt has undertaken for them, and how, in him as their Head and Cautioner, the body of ſin has been crucified, and gotten a deadly ſtroke, makes many think that a juſtified ſtate is a ſtate of licentiouſneſs, and giving way to a willing and chearful ſervice under the command of ſin: the knowledge of this axiom, *that the old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin*, would clear how believers cannot give way to ſin as before; therefore ſays he, *Knowing, &c.*

XI. Believers ſhould look upon themſelves, being united to Chriſt by faith, when they ſee Chriſt crucified, and him who

who is their Head and Cautioner giving death's wounds unto their old master, as dead, therefore they are said to *be dead, be that is dead*; there is not such an union, tie, and obligation betwixt corruption and them; that obligation is gone and broken.

XII. Believers being thus legally dead unto their old tyrannous master, they are freed from any command and authority which sin had, and from any power and tyranny which before corruption did, or could exerce over them: *He that is dead is free from sin.*

VERSES 8. 9. 10. *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

HERE is another argument, shewing, that the state of the justified is such as suiteth well with holiness; yea, such as are justified shall advance in holiness, and grow up in grace, and the work of vivification shall not go back: And thus he proveth it; If believers, or such as are justified by faith in Christ, do and will live with Christ, and partake of the fruits of his resurrection and life, they shall promote and grow up in the work of holiness and sanctification, and that work shall not utterly decay and go back again: But so it is that the justified do and shall live with Christ, &c. Therefore, &c. The assumption he confirmeth in these words, *If we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall live with him*; that is, it is a truth firmly to be believed, that as Christ was our Head when he died, and we in a manner died in him, and are now made partakers of the fruits of his death, to the mortifying of sin; so was he our Head when he arose, and we, in a manner, rose with him, and so shall be made partakers

in due time of the fruits of his resurrection, to growth in grace, and to partake of glory at length; for as he was our Head in the one, so in the other; and there is as close an union betwixt Christ and us in the one as in the other. The proposition he confirmeth, verse 9. where he says, *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more power over him.* The proof may be conceived thus; If Christ, being now raised from the dead, shall never die again, but live for ever, and so the fruits of his resurrection and life never decay, but be still fresh and green; then such as live with him must advance in holiness till they come to glory: But so it is, Christ dieth no more, death hath no more power over him; therefore he is now freed from the state of death and humiliation, which he willingly underwent for the behoof of the elect, and is no more under the bondage thereof. And this he further confirmeth, verse 10. saying, *For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* As if he had said, death can no more have dominion over him, for, 1. *He died unto sin once*; that is, being cautioner in our room, he freed himself of that obligation he lay under, and satisfying justice, he cancelled the bond, and so took the life of sin away, that it should no more kill, and that once for all; and therefore having done the business, death can have no more power over him. And, 2. *He liveth unto God*; that is, he is now freed from the state of humiliation, and is living a glorious and heavenly life, free from Satan's temptations, and the miseries he underwent as our Cautioner, before.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is useful and advantageous for believers to be often remembering their union with Christ in his death, and their interest therein, he being their Head and Cautioner, and this may be the ground of sweet

ſweet inferences, full of conſolation; therefore he mentions believers being dead with Chriſt over again, and hence infereth their union with him in his reſurrection, ſaying, *If we be dead with Chriſt, we believe, &c.*

II. Conſidering our intereſt in Chriſt's reſurrection, and how he aroſe as our Head, and for our advantage, we may be perſuaded that believers ſhall live in newneſs of life, and ſhall have influences coming from him, whereby they ſhall be quickened and advanced in grace; for this is the apoſtle's argument, *We believe that we ſhall alſo live with him.*

III. However we are not made partakers of all the fruits of Chriſt's Mediatorſhip at once; yet whoever are partakers of one, ſhall be partakers of all, in due time; for whomſoever he did one piece of his mediatory office, for theſe he did all of it; and particularly, for whomſoever he died, for theſe allenarly he roſe again; ſo that whoever can claim any intereſt in his death, may lay claim alſo to his life, and whoever finds the good of the one, ſhall find the good of the other in due time; for the apoſtle would have them concluding, and certainly perſuading themſelves of the truth of the one, from the other, ſaying, *If we be dead with him, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him.*

IV. Chriſt Jeſus having taken on our debt, was brought to a low paſs, and made to undergo the miſeries of this life, yea, and to be under the command of death for a time, as a priſoner in his goal: thus it is ſuppoſed, when it is ſaid, *Death hath no more dominion over him*, that ſays, it had once dominion over him; and all this was not againſt his will, but voluntarily; he ſubjected himſelf to this ſtate, for our behoof.

V. Chriſt by his death did ſo far ſatisfy juſtice, and pay for all which he undertook, that the Father, who was the creditor, (to ſpeak ſo) came and took him out of priſon, as having no more to require of him; therefore he is ſaid to be

raiſed; and not as if he did not raiſe himſelf, he being God equal in power with the Father, but to ſhew, that God received ſatisfaction, and, in testimony thereof came, as it were, and brought him out of priſon: *Chriſt being raiſed from the dead.*

VI. When Chriſt Jeſus was raiſed from the dead, his ſtate of humiliation was ſo fully at a period, and juſtice ſo fully ſatisfied, as he was never to undergo the leaſt degree of humiliation again: *He dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him.*

VII. The conſideration of this, that Chriſt is now exalted for ever, and ſhall never taſte of death again, may abundantly aſcertain believers, that ſeeing they live with him, and he liveth for ever, and is continually ſending out ſweet ſtreams of ſtrength and influences, for the upholding and carrying on of his members, they ſhall never fall away and loſe the life of God altogether, and turn dead again; but ſhall ſtill advance forward towards glory: for, ſays he, *We ſhall alſo live with him; knowing this, that Chriſt being raiſed from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

VIII. Our Mediator Chriſt being ſo excellent a perſon, his death was ſo full a price, and ſo ſatisfactory unto juſtice, for all theſe ones for which it was offered up, that it needeth not to be repeated, but once for all this ſacrifice was offered: *He died once.* See Heb. vii. 27. 1 Pet. iii. 18.

IX. Whatever victory believers get over corruption, it is in and thro' the death of Chriſt, by which their final victory, in the Lord's own time, was purchaſed; he, as our Head and Cautioner, conquered ſin, and killed that ſtrong one: *He died unto ſin once.*

X. Chriſt having conquered death, and ſatisfied juſtice, was advanced to great honour and dignity, having a name above every name, Phil. ii. 9. and now liveth a glorious life: *He liveth unto God.*

XI. Chriſt, in his death, killing ſin the arch-

arch-enemy, and that as our Head, and in our name taking possession of glory, and a life with God, may persuade believers, who are his members, that certainly sin shall not be their death, or utterly overcome them, but shall so decay, as at length it shall utterly be destroyed, and grace shall so grow, as at length it shall certainly end in glory, and they shall live unto God as their Head doth now; for to this purpose doth the apostle use this expression, *In that he died, he died unto sin: and in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

VERSE II. *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

THis is the conclusion of the whole preceding discourse; he would have believers casting up their accounts, and concluding, that seeing Christ their Head and Lord is dead unto sin, and alive unto God; so they who are his members, and who were represented by him as a common person, are wholly dead unto sin; that is, freed from the power and swing thereof, and alive unto God; that is, perfectly sanctified. This is not to be understood, as if believers were thoroughly mortified, and perfectly sanctified; this is not to be understood; but thus, That though, in themselves considered, the work be but imperfect, yet it is complete in their Head, even in Jesus Christ their Lord, who as a common person represented them, and in that respect they may by faith reckon it so with themselves.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Believers being married to Christ through faith, may by faith lay claim unto Christ dying and rising, and may conclude their right unto the fruits of his mediation: *Likewise reckon ye also, &c.*

II. Jesus Christ hath a special relation to believers, and they to him; he is their

Lord and Governor; their Head and common person: *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

III. By virtue of this union betwixt Christ, as a Lord and Head, and believers, as his members, believers may persuade themselves of a full victory over sin, and of a thorough sanctification, having a right thereto in Christ their Head, though they win but to the possession of it in part, while they are on this side of time; they may conclude themselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God, tho' at present they be mastered with corruption, and a body of death: *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

IV. The life of holiness is a life tending much to God's glory and honour, being wholly spent for him, as eyeing his advantage mainly; and a life tending to the everlasting possession of glory, and communion with God there: *They are alive unto God.*

VERSES 12. 13. *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

IN this second part of the chapter, the apostle having now cleared how sanctification and justification go together, he does now press all believers, who thro' faith are put into a state of justification, to mind holiness, and a life of sanctification.

The duty is set down in two parts, to wit, in mortification and vivification. *First, Let not sin reign in your mortal body:* Thus he, 1. sets it down in general, that they would look on that master-sin, and natural corruption, which always abideth, and is the root of all other sins, as their adversary, and as a tyrant whose tyranny they should

ſhould labour to diminish, and oppoſe all they can. 2. He ſets it down more clearly, in two branches; (1.) *That ye ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof*; that is, beware that you become not a ſupple ſervant to ſin and corruption; do not ſo much as yield obedience to the very firſt motions and riſings of ſin in you; ſtrive againſt the very firſt orders of that tyrant: And, (2.) *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin*; that is, as you would not obey this tyrant, ſo be not a ſoldier under his command, to advance his intereſt; bear not arms under him; let not your members of body, or faculties of ſoul, be at his ſervice, as devoted unto unrighteouſneſs, to work nothing but ſin. Secondly, The other part of the duty is in theſe words, *But yield yourſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from the dead, &c.* That is, give yourſelves wholly away to God, as your Lord and Maſter; yea, and dedicate all that is in you; your faculties and members give them away to God, as instruments for working righteouſneſs, and what is well-pleaſing in his eyes.

Moreover, in the words there are ſome arguments couched, the more to preſs home this duty; as, 1. in the word *therefore*, which has reference to what he was ſaying before, as if he had ſaid, Since you are now in a juſtified ſtate, united unto Chriſt, and have ground to expect from him virtue to ſubdue ſin, and to live unto God, therefore look like ſuch, and let not corruption have full ſwing and ſway. 2. *In your mortal body*; that is, in your body, which will ſhortly return to diſſolution; your battle will not laſt always, and therefore ſtrive the more courageouſly: Or thus, Your body is but weak and feebleſs, it is mortal, and tending to diſſolution, therefore you have ſo much the more need to take heed that corruption get not the upperhand there. 3. A third argument is in theſe words, *As thoſe that are alive from the dead*: As if he had ſaid, It

is a ſhame for you, who have been reſcued from the bondage of ſin already, and brought out from its black quarters, to be ſhacking hands with that cruel tyrant.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Believers, ſo long as they are on this ſide of eternity, will never be free of an indwelling body of death; but, do their beſt, that arch-enemy of their ſalvation will be keeping houſe-room within them: This is ſuppoſed when they are deſired, not to *ſuffer it to reign*, it ſays there it will abide.

II. Even believers, who have ſmarted ſore by the dominion of ſin in them already, are in hazard to be again captivated, and to look on ſin as their king, by complying therewith, yielding obedience thereunto, and promoting the intereſt and deſigns thereof: This is alſo ſuppoſed here, for if they were not in hazard of this, there needed not ſuch directions and motives.

III. It is the duty of all believers to be conſtantly exerciſing themſelves in oppoſition to the domineering tyranny of a body of death within them, which is ſtill ſeeking to have the throne, and the ſwaying power of all; and it will take up a believer all his days, even to get this much done, to get corruption kept out of the throne and from tyrannizing over, and maſtering and flattering them: *Let not ſin reign*.

IV. The ſtate in which believers now ſtand, being juſtified through faith in Chriſt, by which they have near acceſs to him, yea, have an union with him, and by virtue thereof have a good warrant to make uſe of the great ſtock of ſtrength which is in Chriſt, ſhould animate and encourage believers to ſet againſt this tyrant, and oppoſe him all they can. There is an argument in the particle *therefore*, *Let not ſin reign therefore in your mortal body*.

V. The conſideration, of the ſhortneſs of the time of fighting, of our mortality, and of the weakneſs of the mortal body

to resist, if once sin get up its head, should encourage and press us to a constant warring and opposing of this body of death, that it may not sway the sceptre in us, and rule us at will: *Let not sin reign in your mortal body.*

VI. This tyrant sin, and a body of sin which is within us, has a number of constant attendants, as so many ready servants, seeking to subdue the poor man: It has lusts, these are the first risings and motions of the soul towards sinful objects; these acts of concupiscence are the lusts and first brood of this mother sin; *the lusts thereof.*

VII. Though the believer cannot be kept free from those motions of a body of sin and corruption within, but they still attend that tyrant, and are sins before God, being *lusts of sin*; yet it is a believer's duty, who would not willingly betray himself into the hands of this deadly adversary, to be opposing the very first motions and incursions of this adversary; and to be consenting unto these first sinful motions of this body of sin, is a way to help this tyrant to the throne, and therefore the believer should refuse all consenting thereunto: *That ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

VIII. When this body of death has gotten its motions yielded unto, it will not rest till it have the outward man set on work to act what is conceived; as it has gotten the mind and will mastered, so will it labour to have the members on foot for promoting of sin, and bringing it to perfection; thus, *When lust conceiveth, it bringeth forth sin*, James i. 15. Therefore he must farther advise them, *not to yield their members unto sin.*

IX. When a believer is so far over-swayed with corruption, as that not only its first motions are consented unto, and entertained with delight and complacency, but also the outward man is actively carrying on corruptions, designing and bringing out sin into act, then has this master sin gotten the throne, and is swaying all in

the soul, for that time; and the resisting of corruption here is a good mean to bear down this tyrant: *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.*

X. Howbeit sinners may put fair faces on their actions, and have good thoughts of much that they do; yet there is nothing which this body of death within them prompts them to, and which they do in obedience unto that tyrant, that is any thing but unrighteousness; the very members that acteth sin are called members and *instruments of unrighteousness.*

XI. Whoever makes no resistance unto this body of sin within them, but yields obedience, and acteth what she commands, they carry themselves as if they were devoted to sin, and as if their members had no other office, and were for no other use; and so are called *instruments of unrighteousness.*

XII. Believers should look upon themselves as given up and surrendered to the Lord, and should daily be yielding up themselves unto the Lord, offering themselves and their services unto him, with willingness, cheerfulness, and faithfulness: *yield yourselves unto God.*

XIII. As believers, by their profession, do declare themselves devoted unto God and his service; so should they make it manifest by their daily walk and carriage, and show, that all the parts of their bodies are given up to him, and at his command, by being employed in his service, and helping forward his interest, and work of holiness in themselves and others; we must *yield ourselves, and our members also, as instruments of righteousness.*

XIV. However many have a prejudice at the way of God, and of godliness, and weary of his yoke; yet the truth is, the Lord puts his people to noble service, they do nothing in his service but work the works of righteousness; our members are *instruments of righteousness.*

XV. Whoever are not walking as devoted

voted ſervants to the Lord, are ſlaves to ſin and corruption; the oppoſition ſhews there is no mids, either we muſt yield our members unto ſin, or elſe unto God.

XVI. Believers through faith in Chriſt are raiſed out of an eſtate of death and damnation, and out of an eſtate of impotency, and are now living folks, having life put in them, and growing in life and ſtrength; they are *alive from the dead*.

XVII. The conſideration of this great change that God hath wrought in and about them, in raiſing them from the dead, and putting them into a ſtate of life, ſhould be as a ſpur in the ſides of believers to preſs them forward to holineſs, ſeeing thereby the Lord has laid a great obligation on them, and has put them into a ſtate of life, ſo as they are able to do ſomething that way, through his grace, and are not dead as before: *Yield yourſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from the dead*.

XVIII. Folks devoting of themſelves unto God, and employing themſelves ſoul and body in his ſervice, to promote his intereſt and work, is a ſpeaking evidence of a ſoul's being alive from the dead: *Yield yourſelves unto God as thoſe that are alive from the dead, and your members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God*.

VERSE 14. *For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

THis verſe containeth other two reaſons confirming the former exhortation, and the laſt of them doth confirm the firſt. 1. *For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you*; that is, Set to, and courageouſly ſet to fight againſt ſin and a body of death within you, and be not ſlaves to ſin; for, make you ſure of it, you ſhall obtain the victory, your adverſary ſhall not get the better of you, ſin ſhall not tyrannize over you. And, 2. *Ye are not now under the law, but under grace*; therefore ſtand out: you are not now under a covenant of

works, binding the law upon you in its full ſtrictneſs, and that in your own ſtrength, promiſing no ſupply, nor pointing forth the way how ſupply ſhall be had: the law, as thus managed by a covenant of works, is not your maſter and lord, but you are under grace; ye are under a better and a more gracious covenant, a covenant wherein whatever is required is promiſed alſo; therefore, ſeeing you are now under ſuch a covenant as containeth promiſes answering what is required, and holding forth the way how you may be able to do what is required, you may have the more courage to fight and be bold. This alſo proves the former thus, for if believers be in ſuch a condition, and under ſuch a covenant, they may be ſure of the victory.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' God was pleaſed to condeſcend ſo far as to tranſact with Adam, as a common perſon, as repreſenting all mankind, in way of a covenant, Gal. iv. 24. yet he ſo condeſcended as withal he kept up his ſovereignty as Lord over man, commanding and enjoining obedience in ſuch and ſuch particulars; hence it is often ſet forth under the name of a law, Rom. iii. 27. and ii. 14. 15.: *Ye are not under the law*: This covenant ſtood much in commands, and little in promiſes.

II. Tho' the Lord, in tranſacting with fallen man in a new covenant of grace, did alſo keep up his ſovereignty in enjoining the ſame by way of a law, wherefore it is ſometimes ſo called, Rom. iii. 27. and viii. 2. yet there was greater condeſcenſion uſed in this covenant of grace, and greater ſovereignty in the other, and therefore it is here called a *law*, in oppoſition to the covenant of grace: *Ye are not under the law, but under grace*.

III. Tho' there did much free and un-deſerved grace ſhine forth in God's tranſaction with Adam at the beginning, in his furniſhing him with ſuch graces and abilities as he had, in promiſing ſuch a reward

unto such feckleſs and due ſervice, and that by way of a covenant-engagement; yet this ſecond covenant ſmelleth more rankly of free and undeſerved grace and love, in that it is made with ſuch as not only deſerveth no good, but with ſuch as deſerve much evil, Ezek. xvi. 5. 6. 60. 61. 62. Iſa. lvii. 17. 18. and xxx. 16. 18. Jer. xvi. 12. 13. 14. 15. and xxx. 15. 16; in that he found out a Mediator, and laid help on one that was mighty, and accepted of what he did, 2 Cor. v. 21. John iii. 16. Rom. viii. 32. John iv. 10. and entereth covenant upon ſuch eaſy terms, full of grace, promiſing all that is required, Rom. iv. 16. Eph. ii. 8. 2 Theſ. ii. 13. Eph. ii. 10: all offered moſt freely, Iſa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. and wholly contrived for the glory of free grace, Eph. i. 6. Rom. iv. 16. and therefore it is called *grace* by way of eminency; *ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

IV. Tho' the elect, by nature, and before that the Spirit of grace overſhadow their ſouls, be under a covenant of works, no leſs than others, being *children of wrath by nature*, Eph. ii. 3. *without Chriſt*, and *without God*, verſe 12. becauſe of that ſin and guilt which is conveyed to all mankind, Rom. v. 12. yet now, having thro' grace laid hold on the offered Mediator, and ſo fulfilled the condition of the covenant, and being in Chriſt, they have changed their ſtate, and are now under the covenant of grace: *Ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

V. Tho' believers are ſtill under the law as a pedagogue to lead and drive to Chriſt, as a rule to direct and ſquare their actions, as a curb to keep them from breaking looſe, and as a glaſs to diſcover unto them their ſpots, that they may daily ſeek to the fountain; yet they are no more under it as a covenant of works, binding them to perſonal and perpetual perfect obedience, in their own ſtrength, under the pain of everlaſting deſtruction,

without hope of recovery: *Ye are not under the law.* See Rom. vii. 4.

VI. Tho' the beſt of believers carry about with them a body of death, which ſhall be a daily ſad exerciſe unto them, Rom. vii. 24. and are thereby drawn to ſin daily againſt God, Eccleſ. vii. 20. 1 John i. 8. yet they are free from that ſlavery and bondage which others are into, whereby they can do nothing but ſin; they have not that complacency and delight in aſſing ſin which ſometime they had, they are not under the dominion, ſlavery, and tyranny, and powerful ſwing of corruption, nor do they follow the commands thereof with full purpoſe of heart, and as their trade and conſtant occupation, 1 John iii. 9. *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you.*

VII. This great delivery and freedom which believers have from the dominion, power, and tyranny of ſin and corruption within them, is one of the great advantages which they enjoy by the covenant of grace, where it is promiſed that the confederates ſhall never fully and finally depart, Jer. xxxii. 39. 40. and iii. 1. Plalm lxxxix. 30. 34. 35. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. 27. and xi. 19. where a ſtock of grace is granted, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and daily breathings upon theſe habits, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Song iv. 16. Hoſ. xiv. 5. 8. for the reaſon why ſin ſhall not have dominion over them is, becauſe they are not under the law, but under grace; *For ye are not under the law, &c.*

VIII. Howbeit unbelievers may be kept free from many groſs outbreaks, and eſcape the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Chriſt, 2 Pet. ii. 20. yet all ſuch as are living in black nature, without the covenant of grace, they are ſtill bond-men and ſlaves to ſin and wickedneſs, Gal. iv. 22. ſerving the ſame, Tit. iii. 3. it is only they over whom ſin ſhall not have dominion, who are *not under the law, but under grace.*

IX. So great is the eſſential difference betwixt

betwixt the covenant of works (which was a covenant of friendship, a covenant full of commands, wherein God was to deal according to strict justice, Rom. ii. 6 7. 9. 11. and which was made wholly void upon the least escape, and now is become impossible to be fulfilled by us, Rom. iii. 23. and viii. 3. a covenant commanding nothing but works, Rom. iii. 27. exposing all to a curse for the least breach, Gal. iii. 10.; a covenant which hath not such excellent promises as the other hath, standing upon the condition of works, Rom. x. 5. 6. 9. and all works of obedience required, Gal. iii. 10. and so keeping man within himself for righteousness, Phil. iii. 9. without any promise made touching these conditions, and such works as made the reward of debt, of justice, Rom. iv. 4. having no mediator in it) and the covenant of grace, (which is a covenant of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. 19. full of promises, Gal. iii. 18. in which God dealeth in a way of mercy and free grace, admitting repentance, Luke xxiv. 47. Heb. viii. 12. and so not voided by every escape, Jer. xxxi. 37. Psal. lxxxix. 30. 33. 34. a covenant possible to us now, Rom. iv. 5. Psal. ciii. 18. and xxv. 10. requiring evangelical faith as contradistinguished from works, Rom. iv. 5. a covenant admitting of sincere uniform obedience, 2 Cor. viii. 22. and withal sending a man without himself for righteousness, Rom. ix. 30. 31. 32. all the conditions whereof are promised, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 27. and so making the reward of mercy and grace, Rom. iv. 5. always including a Mediator, Isa. xlii. 6.) that it is impossible that any can, at the same time, be under both; it being impossible that man can be justified by faith and by works, by inherent and by imputed righteousness, by a Mediator and without a Mediator: for these two are here opposed to other, *ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

X. The consideration of the state wherein believers are now. whereby they are ascertained of the victory over all their

spiritual adversaries, should be so far from lulling them asleep in security, that, on the contrary, it should arm them with resolution, and sharpen their endeavour against the same; for this is the apostle's argument wherewith he presseth them to study holiness, *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

VERSES 15. 16. *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

THE apostle foresaw what use carnal Libertines, who loved the way of the flesh, would make of this that he said last, *viz.* That believers were not now under the law; and would hence infer, that since they be not under the law, but under grace, therefore they may take liberty to themselves, and sin as they think fit; the law layeth no bonds on them, nor threateneth them with death for each transgression; and therefore he removeth this objection, 1. By saying, *God forbid*; and shewing the detestableness of such an inference. And then 2. By shewing the unreasonableness thereof, verse 16. saying, *Know ye not, &c.* as if he should say, it is an undeniable principle, that whatsoever master he be that gets your service, his devoted servants you are; so that if sin get all your service, you are devoted servants of sin, and the fruit shall be death; but if you walk like such as are contending for holiness, and designing obedience, then are you servants thereof, and the fruit of that shall be righteousness, and consequently life; for without this righteousness, or holiness, of which he speaks, and not of imputed righteousness, there is no life; and so would he say, Seeing believers, and such as are

not under law, but under grace, are now servants of obedience unto righteousness, and not servants of sin unto death, they should not now yield themselves servants unto sin, but unto obedience.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. So strong desires have many to wallow in the mire and puddle of sin, and lead a licentious life, that their corrupt hearts will even draw encouragement thereto from such grounds, as, if rightly improved, would rather prove matter of discouragement; for from the apostle's argument, wherewith he laboureth to dissuade them from following sin, corruption is ready to gather a strong argument to go on in sin; *What then? shall we sin, &c.*

II. So strong is corruption in us, that we are ready to turn the grace and goodness of God unto lasciviousness; and the more good and gracious he be unto us, to take the greater liberty to sin against him; as if he were rich in his love to us, of purpose that we might fight the more stoutly against him, and to think that we may sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace; *shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?*

III. Guard as we will, in handling the most excellent, sweet and refreshful cordials of the gospel, men of corrupt minds, sworn slaves to their corruptions and lusts, will be ready to abuse the same to their own pernicious ends: for tho' even a great apostle here be unfolding the matchless gospel mysteries, there are some who will be ready to say, *Shall we not sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?*

IV. To conclude, that because believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, exacting perfect obedience, and threatening death for the least escape, and that without any hope of mercy or pardon, terrifying the soul with the apprehension of a dreadful Judge, Heb. x. 30. 31. pointing at no Mediator, and so making them for fear of death to be in bon-

dage, Heb. ii. 15. but under a better covenant, a covenant of grace, promising pardon for escapes, in and thro' a Mediator held forth there, and accepting of sincerity, and requiring nothing in our own strength: Therefore they may loose the reins to sin and iniquity, is a most abominable, unreasonable and licentious inference, to be rejected by all Christians with detestation: therefore says he, *God forbid.*

V. Though believers be free from the condemning power of the law, being now under the covenant of grace; yet are they not the more of that set loose from the law altogether; the covenant of grace keeps still the law, as a rule according to which we ought to regulate our lives and square our actions, that we may win to more conformity with Jesus Christ in holiness: *shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*

VI. Believers having now changed states, and being no more under the law, as a covenant of works; so have they changed relations, and are not now servants of sin and corruption within them, doing all to please the flesh, and to fulfil the lusts thereof; sin is no more now their master: *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin, &c.*

VII. The miserable condition of these who are unconverted, and not brought out of nature into grace, and under a covenant of grace, is such, that do what they will, it is but sin, and serviceable to sin, and to help forward the strength of sin and corruption in them, which is their only master, challenging a right unto all their service: *his servants ye are; whether of sin unto death; which is true of those who are under the law.*

VIII. That which believers, being now under new relations, are leveling and aiming at, is conformity unto that perfect rule of righteousness, and obedience unto his revealed will, that they may win up unto some greater degree of holiness and inher-

ent righteousness, which all must have who have a mind to inherit life eternal; they are *servants of obedience unto righteousness*.

IX. Because the new covenant-state of believers puts them under new relations, and turneth their faces to another air than they were towards before; so that they are to have another end and scope before them, even obedience unto righteousness: therefore the very new covenant-state of believers lays obligations upon them to follow after holiness, and to frame all their actions thereunto; since they are under grace, and are now servants of obedience unto righteousness, they should now yield themselves servants to obey him whose servants they are: *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, &c.*

X. Whatever advantage sinners think to attain to by following a trade of sin; yet death shall be found to be the upshot of all: *whether of sin unto death.*

XI. There is no way to win to that inherent righteousness, which is called for from all such as are in the covenant of grace, but by yielding obedience unto the holy commandments of God: *of obedience unto righteousness.*

XII. Let men profess never so fair, yet their practice and daily walk will declare under whose colours they war, and whose servants they are: *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey.* So that the trade, and constant walk of a man is a good mark to try in what state he is.

VERSES 17. 18. *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

HAVING, as we heard, removed the objection, he goeth on to press believ-

ers unto the further study of holiness, and maketh use here of a sixth argument, to this purpose; Tho' once ye were the servants of sin, yet now ye are made free from that slavery, and have chosen a new master, ye are become the servants of righteousness, and therefore it becometh not you to be serving the old master again, but to be serving him whose servants you are. Now this he illustrates, verse 17.

1. By telling, that they were once in another condition; *ye were once the servants of sin.* 2. By telling the way how the change came; *ye have obeyed*, says he, *from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you*; that is, you have unfeignedly and sincerely submitted unto that gospel which we preach, and yielded yourselves up to that doctrine, which is as a stamp to leave some impression upon your hearts; ye have given up yourselves, as wax, to that seal; for so the words may be read, *that form of doctrine, or stamp, to which ye were given up and delivered.* 3. By adding a word of thanksgiving at the memory of such a great mercy; saying, *but God be thanked, &c.* and thereby leading them up to the fountain and spring of this excellent change.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Believers, before they got grace to flee in to Christ, were slaves to their own lusts and corruptions, following the commands of the flesh, and running with delight and pleasure the ways of sin, no less than others: *ye were the servants of sin.*

II. So rich and admirable is the free grace of God, that he will not stand to take by the hand, and bring into a new covenant-state, even such evil deserving creatures, as have been active against him, serving his adversary sin with great zeal and forwardness; even such as sometimes were *servants of sin*, have gotten grace to obey a new form of doctrine.

III. Never should we call to mind the wonderful goodness of God unto us in delivering,

livering us from a state of nature, and bringing us into a state of grace, but our hearts should swell with the praises of God, and we should, with thankful hearts, in sincerity sing a song of praise unto his name; such sense should we have of the matchlessness of that unspeakable mercy, as we are taught by the apostle's saying, *God be thanked*, when he is mentioning this mercy.

IV. A gracious soul that has ever tasted of the sweetness of the work of God in his own soul, will be unfeignedly glad at the work of God in others; the conversion of others will be laid hold on by them, as an occasion whereupon to magnify and extol the name of the Lord, especially if they be ministers, whose work it is to draw folks in to Christ: therefore, when Paul is mentioning this, he cannot but cry out, *God be thanked*.

V. It is profitable now and then to be calling to mind the black and doleful state of nature which sometimes we were in, and out of which we are now delivered thro' free grace, that the unspeakable riches of his grace may never grow little bulked in our estimation, and that our souls may be the more elevated, and made willing cheerfully to sing a song of praise to him who is worthy; *God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed, &c.*

VI. When we call to mind the wonderful change that is made in us, we ought to look beyond ourselves, as having no hand therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, till free love breathed upon us; and still running away from God and all good, till irresistible grace drew us back; and look to God as the prime and principal agent, the only worker of the work, and he only who is worthy of all the praise: *God be thanked*, leads them up to him as the main worker.

VII. The way how God, by his most powerful grace, begeth a soul to himself, and worketh this real change in their state and condition, bringing them out of darkness into light, and from under the

slavery of sin and Satan, into the kingdom of his dear Son, Acts xxvi. 18. is by working wonderfully upon their wills, and powerfully inclining them to yield obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to give up themselves thereunto: *But ye have obeyed that form of doctrine*. See Psal. cx.

VIII. It is not a bare profession of subjection and obedience to the gospel, that will do the turn, but it must be real, inward, hearty, and sincere; *ye have obeyed from the heart*. The heart it is which God calleth for.

IX. Where-ever the gospel of Jesus Christ is kindly, heartily, and sincerely welcomed and embraced, it will not be halved, or any way divided, but wholly accepted of, as all necessary, useful, and desirable; the whole draught, form, and plot of it, will be sweet to a sincere soul, and heartily submitted unto, nothing in it will be balked, or waved, it will be found so well ordered in all things: *Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine*; not this or that piece of it, but the whole draught and platform of it.

X. Where-ever the gospel is kindly entertained: it imprinteth a stamp of itself on the soul, so that a true believer has a soul resembling the draught of the gospel, cut out, as it were, according to the gospel, having a lively image and picture of the frame of the gospel upon it, and, as it were, casten into the mould of the gospel; there is a metaphor here from a stamp leaving a vive representation and resemblance of itself upon wax or any soft matter: *that form of doctrine* (or stamp of doctrine) *which was delivered to you*; or rather, which ye were delivered up unto.

XI. Though many true believers do in many things look often unlike the gospel, and come short of that comely picture, and draught or image which they should carry about with them; yet there is none who have sincerely closed with Christ in the gospel, but in some measure or degree the image of the gospel is drawn on their hearts:

hearts: all who have obeyed the form of doctrine, have been delivered up to it; *you have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine to which ye were delivered up.*

XII. The best way of obeying, submitting unto, and closing with the design, frame, and draught of the gospel, is, to give up ourselves thereunto, to receive the impression thereof, and to have every draught drawn upon our souls, that so our hearts may answer every line thereof: *ye obeyed*, says he, *that form of doctrine, when ye delivered up yourselves unto it*, to receive the impression thereof; as it were.

XIII. This hearty submitting, accepting, embracing, and according with the gospel, is the only way of wining to freedom from under the tyranny, oppression and slavery of sin; and only such as have this stamp of the gospel upon their hearts, have the stamp and impression of the old man of sin so obliterated, as that it shall not be so legible: *being then made free from sin.*

XIV. Believers in closing with Christ, give up themselves to a new master, and take new work in hand, carrying a new image and superscription upon their hearts, even the image of holiness, and of the doctrine of the gospel; and whoever have sincerely welcomed the gospel of Christ, are now designing righteousness, and making that their trade and constant work: *ye became servants of righteousness.*

XV. Before any can sincerely aim at holiness, and carry themselves as servants of righteousness, their hearts and hands must first be loosed from their old service and employment, and they must be loosed from the obligation of their old master; so that whoever is not trading after righteousness, is still under the fetters of sin, none can be serving both: *being made free from sin*, then *ye became the servants of righteousness.*

XVI. The obligation that lyeth upon believers, by their closing with Christ in the gospel, and the vows and resolutions they took upon them, and the new en-

gagements they took on them, should lay strong bonds upon them to study holiness constantly, that they may daily look more and more like unto that stamp of divine doctrine in the gospel: This is the apostle's argument pressing them to holiness, *being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.*

VERSE 19. *I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.*

A Seventh argument is here set down to this purpose, It is all equity and reason that you should be as diligent, painful and zealous servants for righteousness and holiness, now, after you have changed masters, as you were before for uncleanness and iniquity. And this argument he 1. ushereth in with a kind of apology for his using of such similitudes; *I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh*; that is, I make use of those homely and obvious similitudes, that you may be the more able to take up what I say, and see the equity of what is desired and pressed; for you are so carnal, that you cannot easily perceive and take up this, if it be not laid out before you in this homely manner, and not in such a spiritual and sublime manner suiting the purpose. 2. He illustrateth it by clearing the two states, and comparing them together; and shewing, what they did under the old state, and what, in equity, they should do now: And (1.) says he, Your members and faculties were servants unto uncleanness and iniquity before, as devoted to that service; but now your members are servants of righteousness, devoted thereto. (2.) You yielded your members unto iniquity, you sisted them, and had them ready at a call for that work; and now you

should list them, and have them in promptness for holiness. (3.) As you yielded your members servants to such work before, that was but filthiness and sin, or transgression of the holy law of God; should you not much more yield your members unto the work of sanctification and holiness?

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Though holy and heavenly truths should not be handled in an unseemly scurrile manner, rendering the same contemptible unto hearers; yet they should be handled and held forth in such a cleanly, homely manner, as may be most taking with, and best understood by the hearers; and so sometimes it is best to forbear such a high, soaring, spiritual, suitable manner of expressing truths, and chuse a way more after the manner of men; *I speak after the manner of men*, says Paul: See John iii. 12.

II. So far out of frame may a people be for hearing the sacred truths of God laid forth in a manner suitable to their nature; that, of necessity, necessary truths must be laid forth in a homely dress: *I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh*.

III. In the state of nature, tho' some may have more polished dispositions and inclinations than others; yet all in nature are wholly devoted and given up to sin, all the members of their body and the faculties of their soul are as hired, bound servants unto sin: *ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, &c.*

IV. As the whole man during his continuance in the state of nature, can do nothing but sin against God, his service being wholly given away to that exercise; so men use not to be idle in that service, but with all alacrity, readiness and promptitude, they attend that work, and with all diligence they run to those ways, and perform these works they are employed about; *ye yielded your members unto iniquity*.

V. Tho' some are more addicted to all

kinds of sin than others; yet all who are in nature, have a nature within them prone to all sorts of sin and wickedness, and members ready to run about every evil course, when temptation seteth on: and tho' the devil think fit to employ some more in one piece of service, and others more in another; yet their soul and body is given up and devoted to sin, and nothing but sin, and the vilest sort of sin: *ye yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity*; that is, all sort of sin.

VI. Believers being now devoted, soul and body, unto the works of God, and to do what is well-pleasing in his eyes, ought to give all diligence in their service of righteousness and holiness, and to promote in that, and further that work what they can: *yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness*.

VII. A back-look which a believer may have unto their activity and diligence in running the ways and commandments of the flesh, in the time that they were living in black nature, should be improved for their encouragement to run the ways of God's commandments, with, at least, no less alacrity, zeal, forwardness, constancy, and unweariableness; it being a shame that they should be more slack and coldrise in the service of God than they were in the service of sin and Satan: *For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness*.

VERSE 20. *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness*.

IN this verse the apostle answereth what he said, in the preceding verse, touching their condition while they were lying in black nature; telling them, That *while they were servants of sin, they were free from righteousness*; their minds and all were alienated from the way of righteousness, and they walked as such as had nothing to do with

with

with that exercise, and as if they had a *manumittimus* from the Lord to do what mischief they pleased, they would not be bound with the yoke, and did nothing righteous at all. And in this he pointeth at an eighth argument, to this purpose; It is a shame that you should delight to be back to that condition, wherein you could do nothing but sin; and a shame you should not now be doubling your diligence in holiness, seeing the time was wherein you had no meddling with it.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. However unregenerate persons may do many things upon the matter right, and may walk unblameably; yet they are void of all true christian righteousness, and come never under the bonds and obligations of righteousness and holiness, but walk as bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke: *they were free from righteousness.*

II. Tho' unregenerate persons be not walking as under the tie of righteousness, and be refusing to come under that easy yoke, and will not have that bridle on their jaws; yet they are not at perfect liberty, but rather the greater slaves, having the heavy yoke of sin and corruption lying upon their necks, and these bonds made strong: while they were free from righteousness, they became *the servants of sin.*

III. The consideration of the woful slavery that believers once were in, when unregenerated, how they could do nothing but sin against God, and run at random, as a young heifer, free of all bonds of righteousness; should cause believers loath such a life, and study so much the more to walk now, as having devoted and given up themselves unto righteousness, and having that bridle in their jaws: This is the force of the apostle's argument to press them to holiness, That while they were the servants of sin, *they were free from righteousness.*

VERSES 21. 22. *What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.*

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

THESE verses contain the apostle's two last arguments whereby he presseth them to holiness; as ninthly, You cannot, for your part, tell any advantage, which you either have, or can reap, by your following a course and trade of sin: and he useth three expressions to set forth the sad effects and fruitlessness of the course of sin; as 1. *What fruit had ye then in those things?* He puts this question home to their own consciences, the more to bear home some conviction upon them, Can ye now, for your heart, make any account of the good ye have reaped by sin? 2. *Whereof ye are now ashamed;* ye are so far from being able to show any good fruit or advantage you have had by your sinful courses, that on the contrary, the *summa totalis* of your reckoning, will be shame and confusion of face; you are now ashamed of those ways, and your conscience is checking you for them, and is it fit that ye should be driving again that unprofitable, yea, that shameful trade? 3. *For the end of those things is death;* this will be the end and upshot of following a course of sin, not only shame here, but death hereafter; and is it not best then to forbear, and turn your back upon that way of sin?

The last argument is set down, verse 22. and it is taken from the rich and unspeakable advantage which will follow upon their walking in a state of friendship and reconciliation with God, in a state of freedom from sin, and subjection to God; *being made free from sin,* says he, *and become servants to God,* 1. *Ye have your fruit unto holiness;* that is, Ye have this advantage thereby, on this side of time, even holi-

ness, sanctification, and further conformity unto the image of Christ: and 2. *The end everlasting life*; the upshot of all will be a lasting life of communion with God in glory.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It were good that people were casting up their accounts, and viewing what income they have by following the trade of sin, and seriously putting their consciences to a narrow search and examination, that they may win to discover the absolute fruitlessness and naughtiness of sin: The apostle lays it home to them here, and puts them to the trial, by saying, *What fruit have ye in those things?* he will have them setting to, to cast up their accounts.

II. Howbeit the devil promiseth fair unto sinners, to follow his ways, and deluded souls imagine infinite profit and advantage shall redound to them by hearkening unto Satan's delusions and suggestions, and following a constant trade of sin; yet the *summa totalis* of their advantage will be soon casten up, and in end all their reckoning will turn to nothing: The question is propounded, and left unanswered, because it was unanswerable; *What fruit have ye then in those things?*

III. Would believers seriously ponder and consider how small the advantage was, which they had hitherto reaped, for all their pains and sore travel in following and pursuing the ways of sin and iniquity; they would not take such pleasure in sin as often-times they do, but would scar to follow such Christless and unprofitable courses any more, having seen and tasted of the bitter disappointment of those lies, which sometime they held fast in their right hand: This is the apostle's argument, *What fruit then have ye in those things?*

IV. Whatever pleasure and delight people take in sin, when it is faired over with the devil's false colours, and they tickled with the present acting thereof; yet in the end it shall prove matter of great

shame, when the deceitfulness thereof is found out, and the danger it bringeth the soul into is discovered, and the conscience made to see how loathsome it is in God's eyes, and how abominable it maketh the committer: *whereof ye are now ashamed.*

V. Whatever carnal and worldly advantage sin hath brought to any, yet when the day cometh that the conscience shall be awakened, and sore stinged for sin, so that it shall blush and be ashamed that ever it followed sin and iniquity, all that profit shall soon vanish and disappear; the present shame that shall be felt will weigh all that seeming advantage: *What profit have ye in these things, whereof now ye are ashamed.*

VI. The consideration of the present trouble and vexation of mind that believers have, when they think of their former sinful courses, should be a loud warning to them to forbear that hurtful trade, and follow it no more: he dissuadeth from following a course of sin, by telling them, that they were already ashamed of their former courses. A burnt child should fear the fire. *Whereof ye are now ashamed.*

VII. How little soever sin be feared, yet it will prove deadly ere all be done; how pleasant and delightful the ways thereof prove at present, yet they lead to certain destruction, and to unavoidable death; the end, fruit and upshot of *these things is death.*

VIII. Believers should ever be taking a look of the bitter fruits of sin, and seriously considering what the certain result of a course of sin will prove to be, even shame here, and perpetual shame and death hereafter, that thereby they may keep their hands free of that deadly poison; for this cause he tells them, that *the end of these things is death.*

From Verse 22d OBSERVE,

I. It is useful and necessary for believers oftentimes to be taking a view of their state and condition thro' grace, and to be marking

marking the great alteration that grace has made, that they may read their obligation to God the more clearly and diſtinctly; therefore doth the apoſtle again come over it, and ſay, *Being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, &c.*

II. Tho' ſo long as believers are on this ſide of time, they carry a body of death about with them, and a ſin that ſtill beſets them, and be daily breaking out in actual tranſgreſſions, to the diſhonour of God, and marring of their own peace and comfort; yet are they delivered from the reigning power, the tyranny and ſlavery thereof; it doth not domineer over them as before: *Being made free from ſin.*

III. This ſweet and happy change which is made in a ſoul, is the only work of God; the elect are mere paſſives therein: it is ſo fully the Lord's work, that none of the glory belongeth to any other; therefore he ſays, *Being made free from ſin*, in the paſſive voice.

IV. Believers being by faith delivered from the tyranny and bondage of ſin and corruption, are given away to God as ſworn ſervants to him, for promoting his intereſt, and matters touching his glory and honour; for he addeth, *and become ſervants to God.*

V. The fruit that ſouls reap, through cloſing a bargain with God, and giving up themſelves unto him and his ſervice, is more and more conformity with God's image, in true holineſs; and whoſoever have truly covenanted with God, will find ſome fruit of this kind following thereupon, even growth of grace here away: *Ye have your fruit unto holineſs.*

VI. Howbeit many think little of cloſing with God, and have not a heart for holineſs and piety, but are enemies thereunto, and yet, notwithstanding thereof, think well to reap life in glory; yet there is none that ſhall ever enjoy the crown of life, and live in glory for ever, but ſuch as have given up themſelves to God as

ſervants to him, and lived in holineſs; for he addeth, *And the end everlaſting life.*

VII. Tho' now believers have many ups and downs, and many changes in their condition, and meet with many eclipses, and many clouds interrupting the glorious rays of the ſweet favour of God, which is better than life; yet the life is coming which ſhall never have an end, and then ſhall there never be a vail drawn betwixt Chriſt and believers, but they ſhall ſee him face to face, and live in that condition during all eternity: *The end everlaſting life.*

VIII. The conſideration of the noble and rich advantage of walking with God; and of keeping cloſe with him, ſhould move all the Lord's people to follow holineſs with all their might; and renewed ſights and views of the end of our faith, even the ſalvation of our ſouls, will chear us up to *run the race that is ſet before us*, and to *work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling*. This is the apoſtle's argument to diſſuade them from ſin; *Ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.*

VERSE 23. *For the wages of ſin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

IN this verſe the apoſtle confirmeth both the laſt two reaſons, viz. That the end of ſin is death, and the end of holineſs is everlaſting life; ſaying, *For the wages of ſin is death*; Death doth as certainly follow upon a trade of ſin, as wages followeth the work; death is the due deſert and wages of ſin: *But the gift of God is eternal life*; that is, eternal life will certainly follow holineſs, it being the gift of God, whoſe gifts are without revocation or repentance, Rom. xi. 29. and the gift of God purchaſed by a price; and therefore he addeth, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*: He is the purchaſer of this free gift, and therefore believers may be ſure of it.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Howbeit sin be sweet in the mouth, and men be taking great delight therein, when they are committing the same with greediness, and be ready to promise to themselves good days, and eternal life, notwithstanding of their following a trade of sin; yet bitter shall sin prove in end, when the dreadful wages and reward thereof shall be had, even death; and death will certainly be the upshot, and the end of a sinful life: *The wages of sin is death.*

II. As the grace of God, which he bestoweth upon his people here away, is free and undeserved; so is glory, which will certainly follow grace, a free gift of God, and all will be forced to take it as a fruit

of undeserved and free love: *The gift of God is eternal life.*

III. As eternal life is the free gift of God, so is it purchased at a dear rate, even by the death of Jesus Christ; and this purchase doth not mar its freedom, nor doth its freedom say it was not purchased: it is *the gift of God through Jesus Christ.*

IV. Life eternal being thus the free gift of God, and the gift of God purchased at so dear a rate as the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ; it is freer to believers than if it were made the wages of their working: this is the ground of the confirmation, *The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*



CHAPTER VII.

VERSES 1. 2. 3. *Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man, as long as he liveth?*

For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth: but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

So then if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, tho' she be married to another man.

FROM the 12th verse of the former chapter, the apostle has been exhorting the Romans, and in them all believers, to the study of holiness; and, for that cause, encouraged them, by telling them, they were not under the law, but under grace, so that tho' they were ready to slip aside, because of the remnant of corruption which they carry about with them; yet they needed not be discouraged, because they were not now under the law, rigorously exacting complete and perfect conformity, and condemning for the smallest escape; but under grace, which par-

doneth escapes, and helpeth to more holiness: And having removed that objection which petulant wits, greedily griping after any thing which might appear to foster their looseness, will raise, he cometh now to confirm what he had said, chapter vi. 4. and to clear how they were not under the law, but under grace; and, withal, presseth what he was pressing before, viz. Sanctification; and this he doth unto the 7th verse: then he removeth several cavils, which he knew the wicked were ready to object against his doctrine, unto the end.

The

The argument, then, by which the apostle is proving, that they, that is, believers, are not under the law, may be conceived thus: Whosoever are dead to the law, these are no more under the dominion of the law: But believers are dead to the law; Therefore, &c. The assumption he layeth down, and cleareth, ver. 4. and the proposition he proveth in these verses; 1. In the general, from the nature of the moral law, *The law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth*; laws are not made for dead folk, but for living, to direct their course, and way of walking; and in this, as it were, he appealeth to themselves, saying, *Know ye not?* as if he did not question but they knew this: and then, *I speak to them that know the law*; and this he doth to gain their goodwill the more, and to win in the better upon them, who had such a high estimation of the law, and would easily be offended with any who would but seem to speak any thing amiss of it, or to its disparagement; and for this same cause also, he gives them the appellation of *brethren*, that they might not think he was reasoning thus out of a spirit of contradiction and opposition, for he esteemed them brethren still, but might consent to the truth in a brotherly manner.

Next he proves it in a more particular manner, from a particular law, *viz.* that law of marriage betwixt man and wife, (where we may mark, that it is not his scope to speak fully to the doctrine of marriage, and handle it according to the full latitude, and all its exceptions, but only he speaks of it, as it were, by the bye, as it was first instituted of God;) and so layeth down a comparison betwixt that conjunction which is betwixt married folks, and that which was sometimes betwixt a believer and the law, (whereby also he confirmeth the former reason, for what agreeth to the species will agree to the genus;) and the first part of this comparison is set down, verses 2. 3. (the latter

part being set down, verse 4.) wherein is shown, 1. How the woman is bound to her husband; and, 2. how she is loosed. 1. She is bound, (1.) *so long as he liveth*. (2.) She is bound so as she is not free to marry another; for, *If she be married to another, she shall be called an adulteress*. 2. She is free, (1.) if her husband be dead; for, *if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband*, and is now at her own hand, and mistress of herself. And, (2.) she is so free, that *if her husband be dead, she is no adulteress, though she be married to another*.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Ministers should not study to preach such truths as will relish most with their hearers, and please their palate best; but they ought to lay forth what truths are necessary: and however they be not favourable unto their people, they should so much the more insist in clearing of them, after the example of the apostle, who rested not on one word touching the law's losing power over believers, but, tho' he knew they liked not to hear any thing that seemed in the least to rub upon the law, yet he insists upon that same subject through this whole chapter.

II. In dealing with adversaries, or others, about controverted truths, it were good for their conviction to make use of some known, uncontroverted principle, and thence deduce what they would have received; for where there is no agreement in any common notion or principle, there is no hope of getting truths received: therefore Paul, in debating this matter, doth wisely lay down, in the first place, what they received as truth, and did not doubt of saying, *Know ye not*; which is as much as if he had said, You know this, and cannot deny it, *viz. that the law hath dominion over a man, as long as he liveth*.

III. It is not the most gaining way, in dealing with adversaries of truth, to condemn their parts and abilities, and to speak

of them in an undervaluing manner; but rather; on the contrary, to acknowledge their parts and knowledge, and make use of that for their conviction, as the apostle doth here; he does not lightly them, but says, *they knew the law*.

IV. In all our attempts to gain folks to the truth, we should still labour to gain their affection; and we should so carry our selves, as they may be convinced of our love and tender respect towards them, and that we seek not to shame, or rub any affront on them, but intend, out of a friendly and brotherly manner, to gain them; for Paul doth insinuate himself thus upon these here, by stiling them *brethren*: thus he laboured to conciliate their favour.

V. Whatever laws God is pleased to lay upon the head of any of the children of men, because they come from him who is the supreme Ruler and Governor of the world, and hath absolute power and sovereignty over all creatures, they have a kind of dominion, lordship, and authority over them, authoritatively commanding, forbidding, and threatening in case of disobedience; for Paul says here, that *the law hath dominion over a man*; it hath a lordship and authority, for so the word signifies, Luke xxii. 25.

VI. The Lord having appointed the law to be a rule, whereby our life in a present world may be regulated and squared, this authority and dominion which the law hath over men, lasteth no longer than the man is in a capacity to obey, and in life; for, *the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth*.

VII. Albeit the husband is to give honour to the wife, as the weaker vessel, 1 Pet. iii. 7. yet is she to be in subjection to her husband, 1 Pet. iii. 1. her place and station is a place of subjection unto her husband, who is therefore called *the head of the woman*, 1 Cor. xi. 3.: For here her married state is set out by a word import-

ing subjection, as if she were, so to speak an under-man.

VIII. God, in the depth of his wisdom, hath so contrived the business of marriage betwixt man and wife, as by his law he has appointed a near conjunction to be betwixt them, that they should be united together, as it were, in one; and hence they are called *one flesh*; whereby is held forth what their natural duties ought to be one towards another; so here the woman is said to be *bound*, knit, tied, and joined to her husband.

IX. This tye betwixt the parties is so close and strait, that neither parties have power over their own bodies during the conjunction; but for any of them to give away their bodies to others, (the tye betwixt them and their husband lasting) is to be guilty of the fearful sin of adultery, and to be reckoned with as filthy treacherous adulterers and adulteresses; for the apostle saith, *If while her husband liveth, she be married to another, she shall be called an adulteress*, and so he also.

X. It becometh all who are to engage in marriage, and those also who have any interest in, and power over those who are to engage, to be serious in consulting God upon the matter, seeing the bond of marriage is a tye that will not be easily loosed, even a tye that will last all the days of the other party, except in the case of adultery, Matth. xix. and wilful desertion, 1 Cor. vii. (for as for that law of Moses touching a bill of divorce, it being but a permission and toleration granted for the hardness of the hearts of these people, it is now of no effect): for *she is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he liveth*.

XI. How strait soever this bond of marriage be, yet death looseth it, so that the party surviving may lawfully marry again the second time: See 1 Cor. vii. 39. 1 Tim. v. 19.

XII. Ministers should labour to make what truths they hold forth unto people,

as clear as may be, considering their rudeness and incapacity to take up the mysteries of religion, and for that cause may lawfully make use of homely and cleanly similitudes to illustrate points; after the example of Paul, who makes use of the homely example of marriage, to clear the business he is about.

VERSE 4. *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

AFTER he has set down the similitude, he applieth it to his purpose here, and so sets down the assumption of the main argument, which we spoke of before, and confirmeth it from several grounds. Take the whole comparison thus, in short: As there is such a strait tye betwixt married persons, so as they cannot break to other without great guilt, as long as both are in life, but when the husband is dead that tye is loosed, and she may lawfully marry another husband, and be in subjection unto him; so there is a strait tye betwixt unbelievers and the law, or covenant of works, that no man can get shaken off, but will still be under the dominion thereof, that is, under the rigorous exaction of obedience, conform to the covenant of works, and its curse, because of every breach, as long as that law, or covenant of works, stands in full force; but now having fled in to Christ you are freed from the law, that former husband is dead, (but least he irritate them, he changeth the phrase, and instead of saying, *the law is dead to you*, he says, *you are dead to the law*, it being all one thing upon the matter; for the wife is no more bound to her husband when he is dead, than if she were dead herself,) and are married to Christ who is risen from the dead, and so dieth no more.

So then, in this verse (to consider it in itself,) 1. The assumption is laid down, *Wherefore, my brethren, ye are become dead to the law*; ye are judicially and legally dead to that law as a covenant of works, pressing complete obedience, yielding no assistance, but condemning for the least transgression, and so it is not your husband to lead you to heaven, and whose commands you must obey for life. 2. He clearerth and confirmeth this, (1.) by shewing the way how this liberty from such a rigorous domineering husband was procured and obtained, *viz. by the body of Christ*; he being your cautioner laid down his life a ransom, and satisfied justice, and the law, and thereby hath obtained everlasting redemption, and *bloted out the handwriting which was against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross*, Col. ii. 14. (2.) By shewing a twofold end of this liberty; 1. *That ye might be married to another, even Christ*: Ye were not delivered (would he say) from your former husband that you might live as your listed, but that you might be tied to another husband; and this other husband is described to be *him who is raised from the dead*, to shew the unchangeableness of this match that will never be dissolved; for death dissolveth the marriage knot, but here there is no fear of death, he being already dead and risen again: as also, to shew how we shall rise with him by virtue of his resurrection; and therefrom also have influence to rise unto newness of life, which we are called to. 2. The other end is, *that we should bring forth fruit unto God*: alluding unto the state of marriage, one end whereof is to bring forth a holy seed; hence children are called the *fruit of the womb*. Psal. cxxvii. 3. and cxxxii. 11. We were not set free from the law, and married to Christ, that we might lead a licentious life, but that we might glorify God in our Christian walk, and bring forth such works to our husband, who is God,

as are according to his command, and will be acceptable unto him.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Unbelievers, who have never yet fled in to Christ, are lying under the law as a covenant of works; and they are so fast tied unto that rigorous husband, and bound over to subjection thereunto, that there is no loosing of the tye; while they remain such they are still bound to yield perfect obedience, and that in their own strength, which is impossible; and that under no less penalty than the everlasting curse of God: this is clearly implied, while he says, *they are now become dead to the law.*

II. Believers in Jesus Christ have that privilege, beyond others, that they are now, being in Christ, as free from the curse that was due to them by the covenant of works which was broken, and from any obligation to study, in their own strength, complete conformity unto that law, for life and salvation, as if there were no other possible way for attaining justification and salvation but by so doing; for Paul says, they were now *become dead to the law.*

III. If people were thoroughly convinced that they had a room in the affection of pastors, it would much help them to profit by them, and to receive the truth at their hands; and therefore ministers, on the one hand, should study, with all good conscience, to walk so as may serve to convince their people that they love them tenderly; and, upon the other hand, people should beware to entertain jealousies of their pastors knowing how prejudicial that will prove, and what a hinderance it will be unto their profiting: therefore the apostle doth again say, *my brethren.*

IV. So straitly are people by nature bound over to the curse of God, and the law of works, that there is no possibility to get this bond loosed, because of God's justice and truth, upon the one hand, and

man's inability to satisfy justice, upon the other hand, but by Jesus Christ: therefore it is said, *they are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.*

V. Ere this bond and obligation could be loosed and cancelled, justice behoved to have a complete satisfaction made, and Christ therefore behoved, in name of all his own people, to lay down his life, and offer up his body upon the cross, for no less could stop the mouth of justice; therefore it is said, *By his body.*

VI. In dealing with the adversaries of truth, we should not rigidly stick unto terms and expressions, if the truth may be gained otherways, lest it turn to a mere litigation and strife about words, which will but occasion contention, and no edification; for Paul will not needlessly irritate them, by using an expression which he saw might well be forborn, without any prejudice to truth; and whereas he should have said, according to the comparison, *And now the law is dead to you*, he says, *Ye are dead to the law*, which maketh no less for his purpose.

VII. Believers have Jesus Christ for their husband, and the tye which is betwixt him and them is a strait and indissoluble tye, set out here by the tye of marriage betwixt married persons, so that neither life nor death, things present nor things to come, persecution nor distress, can dissolve the same; hence is he often called our *husband*, 2 Cor. xi. 2. and they are here said to be *married to another*, viz. Christ.

VIII. There is no union to be made up berwixt Christ and a soul so long as they are tied to the law as their husband: these covenants of works and grace will not join together, in whole or in part; for if it be by works, it is no more of grace; and if of grace, it is no more by works: and before a man can expect life and salvation thro' Christ, he must wholly renounce the law, and the righteousness thereof; his former husband must be dead

before he can be married to another; he must be *dead to the law*, before he can be joined, or *married to another*.

IX. Christ Jesus did never redeem souls from the curse and jurisdiction of the covenant of works, that they might, so to speak, be at their own disposal, and join to whom they pleased; but allenarly that they might be married to himself; there is no mid state here, or state of widowhood, but either a soul must be under the covenant of works or of grace, and must either have the law for its husband, or Christ; for this is one end of our delivery from the law, *that we might be married to another*, that is, Christ.

X. The union and conjunction betwixt Christ and believers is so strong and lasting, that there is none comparable thereto; it is an union that shall never be loosed, it shall last for evermore, death itself shall never loose this knot; for our Husband is one who is *raised from the dead*, and so needeth fear death no more.

XI. Howbeit there were some who rose from the dead before Christ arose, as Lazarus, and the other young man whom Christ raised; yet seeing none of those did arise by virtue of their own power and strength, this title of being raised from the dead, cannot so properly belong to them as to Christ, who as he died and was laid in the grave for our good, so did he arise again by his own power, John x. as head of the church, by whose virtue all his members must arise; hence is he called, *the first-fruits of those that sleep*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. *The first-born from the dead*, Col. i. 16. and *the first begotten of the dead*, Rev. i. 5. For here it is his stile to be *him that was raised from the dead*, to shew, that it agreed to him in some eminent manner, in which it did not agree to others.

XII. Although believers are freed from the covenant of works, and from obedience unto the law as a covenant of works, yet are they not altogether freed

from the law, as if they were not bound to yield any obedience thereunto, but are no less tied unto obedience, tho' under another consideration, than if they were to purchase life thereby; for the marriage state with Christ is a faithful state, a state wherein they are to *bring forth fruit*.

XIII. Folks being freed from the law, and married to Christ, is so far from loosening the reins unto licentiousness, that, on the contrary, it is one main design of God's loosening them from the law, *that they may bring forth fruit unto God*; and so for folks to imagine the contrary, is to frustrate God of his end.

XIV. Whatever shew of religion such may have in their carriage, who are unreconciled to God thro' Christ, and are still under the covenant of works, and not married to Christ, yet there is nothing which they do, whether in their civil or christian stations, that is acceptable to God; their *plowing is sin*, Prov. xxi. 4. their *sacrifices*, Prov. xxi. 27. and xv. 8. for *they bring forth fruit unto God when married to Christ*, and not till then; it is the end of this match, and so could not be attained before this match was made: and before we can do any thing which will be well-pleasing in God's eyes, we must make a match with Christ, and thereby get a new principle of grace, and a fountain wherein to wash our spots away.

XV. As self is the ultimate end of an unbeliever, who doth all that he doth in religion, and in his ordinary calling, for himself; so a believer being now married to a new husband. hath a new end proposed to himself in all that he doth, viz. God's glory; the fruit which he bringeth forth is *unto God*.

VERSES 5. 6. *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held;

that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

THis last end of the marriage with Christ, *viz.* obedience, and fruitfulness in good works, he presseth here, and confirmeth and illustrateth it from the consideration of their carriage and walk while under their old husband; and so sheweth how equitable and just it is, that now, while married to Christ, they should bring forth fruit unto God; therefore he says, when we were in our unregenerate estate, under the law, or covenant of works, *in the flesh*, being only tickled with the outward sound of the law, destitute of the inward Spirit of grace; while we were in that carnal state in which we were born, and which we had from Adam by carnal generation, whereby we are altogether filthy in soul and body, and every way obnoxious unto sin, and led away with corruption and our defiled nature, then *the motions of sin*, that is, sinful, corrupt motions which are against the law of God, for this is a Hebraism, which doth frequently occur; and well they may be called passions which affect the soul, and draw the whole man away, such passions and affections as stir up to sin, so that by *motions of sin* is meant, in a word, all the motions of the understanding and will both, and so comprehendeth our evil thoughts, counsels, purposes, and all affections which flow from this natural corruption, and drive on to sin: *Which were by the law*; that is, which were the more irritated and stirred up, the more the law curbed and held in by prohibitions and comminations; as any stinking thing will have a worse favour that the sun shine upon it, and that not thro' any fault of the sun, but because of its own unfavoury nature. Now, says he, these motions of sin, which were so far from being restrained by the law, that they were the more stirred up, and grew the more violent, *did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death*; they exer-

cised their power and efficacy through all the members of our body, and faculties of our soul, and stirred them up to act wickedness and iniquity, which deserved death; and they brought forth fruit unto death, as their husband, so that, as it were, death was the proper owner and father of these sins. Now, would the apostle say, if it was so with us, while under our old husband, is it not reasonable, that now, while we are under a new husband, we should serve him? that now while *we are delivered from the law*; and that covenant of works, *that being dead wherein we were held*; that is, the law, in respect of its intolerable and inexorable rigour, being now abrogated; or sin and corruption, which tyranniously held us formerly, being now slain and dead, as to its full strength and vigour; (this is all one, for when this body of death in us is slain, the law cannot condemn;) or, we being dead to the law, as some copies have it, and accordingly is rendered by some; see the margin of some Bibles, (and this is one with the former; for whether the husband or the wife die, the marriage tie is loosed,) *we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*; that is, that we might serve God in that new estate which we have obtained by the Spirit of God, for it is the Spirit that doth work a change in us, 2 Cor. iii. 6.; or by new obedience, both in thought, word, and in deed; and true holiness, flowing from a spiritual frame and new constitution, and done in a spiritual manner, and to a holy end, and helped on by the Spirit of grace; and not in the oldness of the letter, according to the tenor of the old covenant, or works, having only an external shew of obedience, without any heart change; not having the law written in the heart, but only in tables of stone; for the law to the unregenerate is only a bare letter, and never speaks in to the heart.

From verſe 5. OBSERVE,

I. The ſtate of unregeneracy is a moſt ſinful, vile, corrupt, and abominable eſtate, a ſtate of ſin and corruption; wherein the ſoul is plunged in ſin, and can do nothing but ſin, being under the maſtery and dominion thereof; for ſuch are ſaid to be *in the fleſh*; wholly environed and overwhelmed therewith, and enwrapped therein.

II. While a man is under the covenant of works, and not married to Chriſt, all the motions and ſtirings of his ſoul are tainted with ſin, his underſtanding and all the motions thereof, his will and all its actings, and all his affections and paſſions ſmell rankly of the ſtate of ſin he is in: therefore are they called *motions of ſin*.

III. So mighty and proud are thoſe exorbitant, ſinful motions in the unregenerate, that there is no hemming of them in, no dam can keep them in, ſo ſtrong and violent is their current; nay, the more they are bared and damed up, the more fierce and untractable are they; for they break out and buſt out *by the law*, even that law which ſhould have been a bar in their way, and laid a reſtraint upon them, they take occaſion at to ruſh forth with greater force.

IV. Theſe notions and inclinations in the unreconciled, are not only ſinful in themſelves, but alſo they are the ſeed and ſpawn of more miſchief; they are not idle and ſilent, but broody, and have power and efficacy with them: therefore they are ſaid to *work*, and *bring forth fruit*.

V. Howbeit graceleſs, unrenewed ſouls may account themſelves happy in that miſerable and ſinful condition wherein they are; yet in very deed their condition is moſt miſerable and deplorable, being altogether ſlaves to ſin, not having ſo much as one member either of ſoul or body free, but all of them as ſo many underſervants to ſin, or as ſo many ſhops where- in ſin and corruption are working in the

black works of darkneſs: theſe *motions work in our members*.

VI. As ſin and corruption within natural folk are ſtrong and vigorous, and have the faculties and members of the man as ſo many underſlaves ready at command, and very instrumental; ſo is its work anſwerable: ſin will not reſt within, but muſt break out into ſome external act to God's diſhonour; if it be not reſtrained; and the firſt motions of ſin are ſo broody, that they are never choaked till ſin in ſome member or faculty be in ſome meaſure perfected, James i. 5: for thoſe motions *bring forth fruit*.

VII. As the ſtate of unregeneracy is a ſtate of death; ſo all the actions of ſuch as are in that ſtate, are near of kin to death; the reſult of them all ſhall be death: and however theſe, in acting ſin, mind this liſtle, but intend and forecaſt other things; yet they may make themſelves ſure thereof: Therefore they *bring forth fruit unto death*.

From verſe 6. OBSERVE;

I. Believers in Chriſt are brought out of that ſtate of corruption in which they were conceived and born, and no more liable to the condemning ſentence of the law; and that yoke which once was wreathed about their necks, as well as others, is now looſed, ſo great a change doth grace make in ſouls: for the apoſtle ſays, *But now we are delivered from the law*.

II. This deliverance could never have been wrought ſo long as the law and covenant of works ſtood in full force as to them, and corruption and ſin within them retained the old ſtrength; but the covenant or law of works, behoved firſt to be dead, and corruption in part ſlain: Therefore it is added, *that being dead wherein we were held*; and hereby ſheweth the way how this deliverance was brought about.

III. Believers were once no leſs under the ſlavery of corruption within, and dominion and tyranny of the law than others, who

who are yet strangers to freedom; and their life was a very life of slavery and imprisonment: Therefore they are said to be *held*, that is, forcibly, tyrannically, as with both hands.

IV. As it is a point necessary to be believed, that God's loosing us out of the old yoke, was not that we might wax licentious; so it is a point that carnal hearts, who love liberty, and like not to be bound with any bonds, can hardly take up and understand well: Therefore he comes over this again, and says, *we are delivered from the law, that we should serve, &c.*

V. It is a vain and groundless distinction that those of Rome ground their worshipping of saints upon, *viz.* the distinction betwixt two words in the original, *δουλεια* and *λατρεία*, seeing that which they say is only ascribed to creatures, is here attributed to God; so that all sort of worship, or worshipful service is due to God only, and ought not to be given to either saint or angel; for *we should serve God.*

VI. As the state of believers is now new and spiritual, being wrought by the Spirit of God only; so should all their service which they perform to God, be done from a divine principle, through the grace and assistance of the Spirit, to a holy and spiritual end; it should be spiritual and hearty: *we should serve in newness of spirit.*

VII. All the service that was performed by us while in our old state of nature and corruption, was only external and superficial, not from the heart, but hypocritically; not in the Spirit, but in our own strength, the law being never taken up in a right and spiritual manner, but only literally: this is *the oldness of the letter*, which believers should no more follow.

VIII. To consider how diligent the wicked are in working sin, and how diligent we ourselves have been sometime, (who are now changed thro' God's grace) in working wickedness, and in bringing forth sin unto death; should stir us up now to be serviceable to our new husband,

and prove a spur in our side for that effect: for this is the strength of the reason, and the apostle's scope in this place.

VERSE 7. *What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

IN this second part of the chapter, the apostle knowing the Jews would be ready to take exception at that which he had said before, *viz.* That we behoved to be freed from the law, or else we could not serve God in newness of spirit, whereby they would think, that he had insinuated as much, as the law was an utter enemy unto serving of God, and so behoved to be sinful, and the cause of sin; and more particularly, at that which he had said, verse 5th, *viz.* That the motions of sin had a subsistence and being by the law. Wherefore, might they say, If that be true, the law is the proper cause of sin, and so cannot but be sinful. And foreseeing what others in after-times would be ready to gather from what he had said; *viz.* That the law was ill, and came from some ill spirit, and all upon this ground; so did the Manichæans and Valentinians. Therefore the apostle taketh great pains in clearing himself, and in vindicating the law from all those false and groundless calumnies.

And 1. he proposeth the objection, (according to his usual manner) saying, *What shall we say? is the law sin?* Can any blame be laid upon the moral law, which God has given to be a rule of righteousness? To which he answereth, 1. By abominating such an inference, as a conclusion which he never imagined, nor dreamed of; *God forbid*, says he. Then he addeth several reasons to enforce the contrary; as 1. He sheweth from his own experience, (1.) In general; and then, (2.) In particular, how the law was so far from being

the cause of sin, or any friend to it; that, on the contrary, it was the greatest enemy that ever sin had; for it discovered sin, laid hold upon the strength of sin, and so was as a centinel or intelligencer, discovering the motions of sin, and its forces; *I had not known sin, but by the law*, says he; I had not gotten a right sight of the vileness and power of sin, nor had I known well what was sin, and what was not sin, but by the moral law. And this he confirmeth and cleareth, particularly by an instance, and that also in his own experience; *For*, says he, *I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet*; as if he had said, While I was a Pharisee, and unconverted, tho' I knew the law, yet I did not well understand it, I knew not how complete and strict it was: As for example, I knew not that concupiscence, that the first motions of desire, affecting the mind or will, and stirring them up to think, will, or covet evil, was sin; being either after a forbidden object, or after a lawful object in an inordinate manner, and that though the will should not consent thereto; I did not know this, until I had further sight of the law, and there saw it forbidden.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. In bearing in truth upon our hearers, we should labour by all means possible, to guard against any seeming inconvenience, which may be thought to follow upon our doctrine, against which our hearers have a prejudice; as Paul doth; who taketh pains to loose what objections might seem to arise from what he had said before: And for this cause, there is much spiritual sharpness and sagacity requisite, to see whence an objection might arise; and much prudence wisely to remove it.

II. Tho' truth be never so clearly held forth, adversaries having a prejudice against it, and being assisted by Satan, who is ripe of invention, may find ways to loaden it

with inconveniencies and absurdities, which may seem fair and plausible; and notwithstanding thereof, we may not reject truth, which is usually tossed betwixt two extremes: For tho' an apostle (and a great apostle too) had held forth truth in the preceding part of this chapter; yet he foresees, what objections, from absurdities seemingly following thereupon, would be made against it; and for all cleaveth to the truth, and denieth it not.

III. In handling of the law, we ought so to declare the freedom of believers from that bondage, or conjugal tie, (so to speak) unto the law, under which, while in nature they did ly, as not to make it a doctrine, opening a door to licentiousness; and rejecting the law as useless, sinful, or a dead letter, as Paul doth here, who tho' he had said that believers were loosed from the law, yet he will not have the *law* to be *sin*.

IV. Whatever can be made out to be the proper cause of sin, that same is sin itself; so infecting a thing is sin: for instead of saying, *Is the law the cause of sin?* he says, *Is the law sin?*

V. Truth is of such a pure cleanly nature, participating something of him who is the God and fountain of truth, and Truth itself, that it can admit of no sinful and erroneous consequence; nor can any such foul-faced thing be fathered upon it, let seeming grounds be never so fair and specious: for the apostle denieth the consequence, by saying, *God forbid*.

VI. As truth is lively and beautiful in itself; so it should have so much room in our affections, as not to entertain any thoughts to the contrary in our hearts; the very motions of error should be rejected with abhorrence and heart-detestation: So doth the apostle here, saying *God forbid*: error being of such a dangerous and soul-destroying nature, and no way innocent and harmless, it should be guarded against more than any plague; and shuned with great

great carefulness and vigilance; for the apostle, to speak so, fleeth from this error, as a pest-house, by saying, *God forbid.*

VII. Ministers, and private Christians likewise, may lawfully bring forth their own experience in humility, with all prudence and moderation, without pride and ostentation, to clear truths; and ministers, especially, should labour to have the truths which they preach to others, brought so closely home to their own hearts and consciences, that they may be in a capacity to verify what they say from their own experience, if it be possible: so doth Paul here, *I had not known sin*, says he, *but by the law.*

VIII. The law, when rightly studied and improven, will prove a faithful, sharp-sighted scout and intelligencer, discovering the unseen motions and unknown parties of sin, and let a soul see more of sin than ever it saw before, more of its vileness, fruitfulness and efficacy; and this sheweth both the usefulness of the law, and its enmity against sin, or how small a friend it is to it! This is the apostle's argument, why the law is not sin, because it was that by which he came to the knowledge of sin.

IX. Albeit the faculty of desiring, considered naturally, as our other faculties, be not condemned by any law, yet if it be considered morally, and in respect of a law, and being considered now in the case of man fallen, and not as yet renewed by grace, all the motions thereof, first and second, even those which are not consented unto by the will, are sin, being neither towards a lawful object, but what is forbidden, nor in a right manner; but without faith, and ultimately; nor to a right end, they being contrary to a command, which only is our rule, (sin being the *transgression of a law*, 1 John iii. 4.) and not our will; for of these first motions which tickle us, tho' wanting our consent, he speaks here, when he says, *he had not known lust, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet*; for he could not be ignorant, that

the second motions consented unto, were sin, seeing even Heathens did condemn these, such as *envy*, *hatred*, &c. beside it is of such that the tenth commandment meaneth, because otherways it should not differ from the rest, which do condemn the second motions towards those things expressly forbidden in them, as *wrath* and *envy*, in the sixth; *carnal desires*, in the seventh, &c.

X. Sin being a work of darkness lieth so hid and darned, that not only the small glimmering twilight of nature cannot fully discover it, but it may be hid even from these who have outstripped others in point of external worship, and strictness of external conversation, and are looked upon by others as eminent in religion, thro' their resting upon a superficial survey of the law, and not diving in deeper into the profound depths of this most perfect law, which is *exceeding broad*, Psal. cxix. 96.: for Paul was ignorant of much sin, particularly of this of *covetousness*; even when he was a Pharisee, and most zealous in his religion, yea, and blameless also in his conversation, Phil. iii. 5. 6. a man that was always a man of conscience, who did not thorture therewith, Acts xxiii. 1.: for this must be meant of him at that time; for neither can it agree to him while a child, nor when converted.

XI. It is a most presumptuous, groundless thing, for Papists to divide the tenth commandment in two, to the end they may keep up the number ten; and either expunge altogether the second, or cast it so in to the first, as that it may not speak in so even-down terms against their idolatry, as indeed it doth: seeing the apostle comprehendeth all the acts of covetousness, be the object what it will, wife, or goods, if unlawful, under that one, *Thou shalt not covet.*

XII. It is not unsuitable unto the days of the gospel, for ministers to be treating of, and explaining the law unto people, nor ought they for so doing, be reproachfully

fully stiled legal preachers: for even Paul, a most gospel preacher, is here large in handling the law, in explaining it, and manifesting its usefulness.

VERSE 8: *But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.*

IN this verse, as we conceive, the apostle doth two things; 1. He clearth that which he had spoken in the 5th verse, which was the ground of the objection last mentioned; viz. *How the motions of sin were by the law*; by saying, that the body of death within, the natural pravity and corruption that original mother sin took occasion (none being given) at the law's heming of it in with high banks, to break out with greater violence, more impetuously; as a strong running river, the more it be dammed up and hemed in on all hands, it bursts out with greater strength: So *sin* (that is original sin) *taking occasion by the commandment*, its bordering of it with strong walls, *wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*; it begot effectually, and effectually brought forth, it perfected and accomplished sinful motions of all sorts; for the word signifies, *to carry on a thing begun, until it be perfected*, Phil. ii. 12. where it is rendered *work out*. And hereby he further confirmeth, that the law is not the cause of sin, as by a second argument; because, at most it is but the occasion thereof, and an occasion only taken by the natural pravity and corruption within, which is the only proper cause of these sinful motions. 2. The apostle doth further clear and confirm his first argument; *For without the law sin was dead*, says he; that is, until I attained unto the more clear and distinct knowledge of the law, sin was lying dead and buried, never once stirring or kything, but was quite out of sight and mind, as a thing dead and buried.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Men will be ready to blame any thing rather than themselves for sin, and will look over themselves in seeking out the true cause of it, and so be ready to put the saddle upon the wrong horse; but would they look in into their own hearts and minds, they would find out the true original cause of every wicked act, to be a corrupt nature within themselves, and it is their ignorance of this, which maketh them so oft at a loss to find out the true cause of sin: All this is clear from Paul's saying, That it was sin that wrought all lustful acts.

II. Tho' that natural corruption and pravity, which we brought into the world with us, be a punishment of the transgression of our forefathers; yet it is not only a want of original righteousness, as sickness is the want of health, but it is a sinful privation of that righteousness which once we were possessors of in Adam; it is such a corruption of our whole nature, as is offensive to God, and contrary to his holy commandment, and so properly sinful. Therefore it is here called *sin*, as being the chief sin, or mother-sin.

III. So strong and active is this corruption of our natures, that it produceth, causeth, promoteth, and accomplisheth sinful motions and acts of concupiscence in us, even those first motions which are sinful (as was shown before) owe their original and first rise, as also their perfection, unto this fountain evil: for it is this *sin* which *worketh all manner of concupiscence*.

IV. Such as, in their own experience, have felt the activity of corruption, causing actual transgressions, are most able to convince self-righteous folks, whose eyes self-love hath so put out, as they cannot see, or rather will not see, that the native rise of sin is within themselves, and reasons brought from such experiences, are most ready to take with these: as is clear

in Paul's practice here, who maketh use of his own experience, by saying, that *sin wrought in him all manner of concupiscence*.

V. So prone are these naturally corrupted hearts of ours, to break out into all manner of actual transgressions, till grace make a change, and diminish the strength and vigour of original corruption; that what should prove a curb, will prove a spur, and it will take occasion at the law of God, which should be a strong rampart to keep it in, to break out more fiercely: for it is *this sin that takes occasion by the commandment, to work all manner of concupiscence*.

VI. Let men blame the holy law of God as they will, and thereby think to evade God's just judgment because of their transgressions; yet in end it shall be found, that the law of God has had no hand in their iniquities, but at most was a passive occasion, and that sin followed thereupon by accident, by reason of the strength of corruption: Therefore it is said, *that sin took occasion* (none at all given) at the command.

VII. Though corruption be very active and operative in itself, and continually bringing out sinful brood; yet it may be as dead unto such as swell with pride and conceit of themselves, and trust to their own righteousness, their minds being darkened, and their eyes blinded, so as they cannot see the mind of God fully in his law, but rest upon their own superficial glosses, and half interpretations: for so did it fare with Paul, while a Pharisee, not awakened, to him *sin was dead*, that is, to his sight and apprehension his nature was not so vicious and corrupted as indeed it was.

VIII. Let men have as much external, literal, head knowledge of the law as can be; yet so long as it doth not discover the activity and strength of natural corruption, bringing forth actual transgressions, but lieth by as dead and harmless, working no evil, they have indeed no saving knowledge of

the law, and are, as it were, without the law: for Paul says, *he was without the law*, instead of saying, he had not the thorough knowledge of the law.

VERSES 9. 10. 11. *For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*

Moreover the apostle bringeth another argument to prove that the law is not the cause of sin, to this purpose, The law is so far from being the proper cause of sin, that it was the mean of bringing me to a thorough sight and sense of my miserable state and condition; and had it not been the law, I had perished for ever, and my vain and groundless hopes had given up the ghost with me: And hereby also he confirmeth and cleareth how sin was dead. So then, 1. he says, *He was alive without the law once*; the time was, while he, being a Pharisee puffed up with a good conceit of himself, imagining no danger, but looking upon himself as safe, and sure of life, because he was free of external out-breakings, his conscience not condemning him for any thing of that nature, he then was alive, a thousand miles from death or any danger, while he was without the law, that is, the true and spiritual meaning of the law, resting upon his pharisaical glosses, which were most wide, as Christ gives us to understand in his commendations, Matth. v. and vi. Now how was this helped? *when the commandment came*; that is, when the true sense and meaning of the law was taken up, which formerly was exiled and far out of sight, when that came near hand, and was clearly and distinctly seen; then, *sin revived*; sin and corruption, which before was as unknown as if it had been dead and buried out of all mens sight and apprehension;

now gets up, and is now ſeen more fully than ever; it is now brought above ground, and appeareth as one riſen from the dead: *and I died*; that is, when I got ſuch a ſight of ſin now reviving, and appearing from under the aſhes, I ſaw myſelf a loſt man by the law; the more that ſin appeared, the more guilt appeared, and ſo I ſaw myſelf more and more dead by the law. And this he amplifieth by a ſad conſequent, which he hereby had found out by his own experience; *viz.* That the law, which at the begining was appointed to have been the way of life, was now turned quite contrary unto him, and proving a way unto death, becauſe of his natural corruption; *the commandment which was ordained unto life, he found to be unto death*: The law which at firſt was appointed for this end to have been the way unto life, ſo as ſuch as would keep it perfectly ſhould certainly have attained unto life as a reward, was now binding him over to everlaſting deſtruction, becauſe of the penalty annexed, *Cursed is every one that abideth not in every thing written in the book of the law*, it now being broken daily thro' ſin and corruption. And becauſe it ſeemed hard to ſay, that the law was a way unto death unto him, therefore, verſe 11. he cleareth the matter, and confirmeth what he had ſaid, by ſaying, *For ſin taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew me*; that is, the blame is not to be laid upon the law, that it is now turned to be unto death, when before it was unto life; but upon ſin and corruption, which took occaſion by the law. ſeeing the law laying bonds upon it, it was ſtired up the more to uſe all the means and wiles it could, to draw the man unto ſin, and ſo it deceived him; and he being deceived and drawn into the ſnare, he was a dead man, by reaſon of the commination added; and thus the commandment ſlew him.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is natural to all the children of Adam to ly ſecure, and look upon them-

ſelves as far from any danger; they have no will to have any evil thoughts of themſelves; and ſo long as they are in black nature, lying under the power of ſin and Satan, they cannot ſee well how matters go with them, they fear no danger, they have no thought of damnation, but pleaſe themſelves in their own dreams, and look upon themſelves as *alive*; as Paul did once while unconverted; he was *alive once*, tho' never more dead than then, when he thought himſelf alive.

II. One main mean which lulleth natural folk thus hard and faſt aſleep, and keepeth them thus up in their vain conceits, is their want of the ſpiritual ſight of the law; a right ſight of the ſpiritual ſenſe and meaning of the law, would rouse ſinners out of their natural ſecure condition, by diſcovering unto them their guilt, and their danger of eternal vengeance therefore: It was Paul's being without the law was the cauſe of his being alive; *I was alive without the law once*, ſaith he.

III. The right underſtanding of the law being ſo neceſſary and uſeful for diſcovering folks natural condition, and their danger, and ſo a main mean of making them fall out of all conceit of ſin; we may be abundantly convinced, that the law is not to be blamed with our ſins: for this is one reaſon, why *the law is not ſin*, becauſe he was *alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, ſin revived*, &c.

IV. Converſion maketh a real change upon the ſouls of ſinners, howbeit many may be in the dark as to the right taking of it up, and may doubt thereof: for once Paul was *alive*, and then *dead*, and this is a great change; their thoughts of themſelves before and after converſion are very different.

V. As all the faculties of man are naturally deſiled with ſin, and out of a right poſture; ſo in particular, there is great ignorance and darkneſs upon their judgments, ſo as they are ignorant of thoſe truths which are moſt neceſſary to be known;

known; the true sense and meaning of the law is far off out of the reach of their understandings: Therefore *the commandment* is said to come, as being far away out of sight. See 1 Cor. xii. 14.

VI. Tho' sin be most active and stirring in all natural men; yet such is their blockishness, stupidity and blindness, that this is no more felt nor seen, than if it were dead and buried: and to be stupid under, and unaffected with the active motions and stirrings of sin, argueth one to be in black nature, wanting the spiritual sense of the law; for *when the commandment comes, sin revives*; and so while sinners are in nature, the commandment is away, and sin is dead.

VII. Before it can go well with a poor sinner, he must once pass a sentence against himself, and see himself a gone man by the law, condemned and sentenced to death, because of guilt; before he can live the life of God, he must once die: for thus it was with Paul, *he died when sin revived*, he looked upon himself as condemned by law, and so, as a dead man.

From verse 10. OBSERVE,

I. Sin overturneth all things, and changeth the very nature of the law unto the quite contrary; of life, to become death: for it was by sin that the *commandment which was unto life, became unto death*.

II. God at first ordained and appointed the law to have been the way leading towards life; and had man stood in his integrity, he had attained life by the law; for *the commandment was ordained unto life*, of its own nature it pointeth out the way to life, so as the observers thereof shall certainly find life thereby.

III. Since man fell, the law which formerly did point out the way to life unto sinners, is now binding on death and destruction on their shoulders; it being now broken, the threatening must take place, *the commandment is now found to be unto death*.

IV. The law is never rightly seen by us now

in this state of sin, until we find it tending unto death, and wreathing the sentence of death about our necks, and putting us from all hopes of life by it: for *when the commandment came, then he found it to be unto death*.

From Verse 11th OBSERVE,

I. Whatever evil we meet with from the law as now broken, we should be loath to lay any blame upon the holy law of God, which should mainly ly upon ourselves; for tender ought we to be thereof, seeing the proper cause of any evil of that kind is corruption in us, whereby the law is transgressed; for so doth the apostle, after he had said, that he found the commandment unto death, presently addeth, that *it was sin that killed him*.

II. So sibi is our nature unto Satan, that as he is a liar and a deceiver from the beginning, so it has been trained up in his school, and has learned his wiles, and thereby draweth away poor souls out of the way of life which they ought to walk in, by presenting the hook baited with pleasure or profit, and hiding the vileness and dangerousness thereof; and complying every way, and at all times with our adversary, who is still *going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*; for sin is here said to *deceive*: See Heb. iii. 12. 13. Eph. iv. 22.

III. Our corrupt hearts are so bent and wickedly set to lead us astray out of the paths of righteousness, that they are rather stirred up by the law, which should have been a demur in their way, than scared; which should make us, so much the more bemoan and bewail our doolful condition while we are under the power and slavery of such corrupt hearts; for sin is said here to *take occasion at the law to deceive*.

IV. Tho' corruption promise fair unto poor deluded souls, till it get them once ensnared; yet at length it will bring forth death unto the poor soul, and will be found

found the greatest enemy that ever it had, whatever friendship it pretend at present; for *sin killed him*.

V. The main ground upon which sin doth thus prove a destroyer unto poor people, is the holy law of God, by which it is statuted and ordained, that transgressors shall die the death; thus it is, that *the law* (which is the rule of justice, general and particular) *is the strength of sin*; therefore it is added, *by it slew me*; that is, by virtue of the law, which containeth the threatenings.

VERSE 12. *Wherefore the law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

THIS is the conclusion of his large vindication of the law, gathered from his former discourse, and following thereupon; as is clear by the particle, *therefore*; and in it is held out three properties of the law, both in the general, and also in respect of every particular command, chiefly that forbidding concupiscence, viz. that it is *holy, just, and good*; and hereby the objection is abundantly answered, the law is not the cause of sin; yea, so far is it from being the cause of sin, that, on the contrary, it is *holy, just, and good*.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The law of God, in whole and in part, is holy, having the holy Lord for its author, being published by the ministry of holy angels, and containing nothing but duties of holiness, every precept breathing out holiness, and not earthliness or carnality, and tending to make a man holy unto the Lord; this is one of its epithets, *The law is holy*, commanding nothing but holiness and conformity unto God; see Psalm xix. 7-8. 9.

II. As the law is holy, so is it just and righteous; commanding what is just, and

forbidding what is unjust, favouring no iniquity; containing just penalties against transgressors, and just rewards unto due observers; and therefore ought to be looked upon as the everlasting rule of righteousness; for *the law is also just*.

III. Not only is the law of God holy and just, but also good in itself, and profitable unto us, however it be abused by our vicious nature, seeing it holdeth forth the good and acceptable will of God, and the good way wherein we ought to walk, and holdeth forth large and ample promises of good things; and so pointeth out the way unto the everlasting fruition of God in glory, if it were perfectly kept; and now in the state of sin, it is profitable for discovering our lost condition in ourselves, that so we may fly out of ourselves to Christ, the end of the law: therefore it is also called *good*.

IV. We should labour to have suitable thoughts of God's law; even in respect of these particulars which crosseth our corruption most, and which carnal reason would contradict most, as holy, and just, and good; for even the commandment, mentioned formerly, discharging the very first rise of sinful thoughts, and inordinate motions towards any object forbidden, is *holy, and just, and good*.

VERSE 13. *Was then that which is good, made death unto me? God forbid. But sin that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*

THERE is yet another objection, which the apostle foresaw would be made use of by cavillers in after times; he knew what sort of spirits those cavillers were of, who would not soon be satisfied; and submit unto the truth, but would still carp at and raise slanders against it; and therefore, as a faithful teacher, and one desirous to have them savingly instructed,

ed, he further insists in clearing that objection, and in wiping off the aspersions; and therefore, first, he proposeth the objection, *Was that then which is good, made death unto me?* that is, as if they would say, The law is not good, because it was made death unto you, as you said, verses 10. 11. for that which is good cannot be made death, or that which is made death unto any cannot be good. Unto this he answereth, 1. by denying that that was his meaning, when he said, verse 10. That *the command which was unto life, he found to be unto death*, he meant not then to lay the blame upon the law; for it was not the law itself properly that did it, but sin; therefore he says, (as usual in such cases, when the inference is absurd and unchristian like,) *God forbid.* 2. He sheweth positively what is that which we ought to look upon as the proper cause of death, by adding, *but sin*: It is sin and corruption within us which procureth death unto us; it was not, says he, the good law, but sin. And then he cleareth, as before, how it was that sin and corruption was the cause of death, and saith, that *it wrought death in him, by that which is good*; that is, by the law, or commandment, as he calleth it afterward; it was so strong and mighty that it procured death, and broke out, taking occasion even at the law which is good and holy, and giveth no countenance nor approbation to sin in the least. And this he amplifieth, by shewing the upshot of this, (the particle rendered *that*, is sometimes meant of an event any way following, as well as of a final cause) or what little advantage came thereby unto corruption within man; which also holdeth forth the profitableness of the law, even when sin is taking occasion thereat to bring forth death: Sin was hereby discovered, this natural corruption bewrayed itself, and declared itself to be sin, by irritating and kindling up sinful motions, and so bringing death, even taking occasion at the law, *that it might appear sin, working death in*

me, says he, *by that which is good*. So thus the law was good and useful, discovering the inward natural corruption of the heart to be sin, when it thus took occasion, without ground; the law could not be but useful and good, when it made it appear, that such was the strength of our natural corruption, that it would bring forth sin and death, even by the law which was good. This he further clearth in the end of the verse; as if he would say, My meaning is, when I say, *that it might appear sin, that it might* ~~appear~~ ^{come}, or appear to be, *exceeding sinful* bent on sin, extremely hurtful, when it groweth w the remedy, viz. the comm.

So then, in short, the apo the blame of our death and del the law, and lays it upon our corruption, which he affirmeth to active and noxious, even in the both these the apostle further confirmeth and clearth in the following verses.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is a most dangerous thing to be given to a spirit of cavilling and contradiction; such who are so possessed, will not soon receive satisfaction in particulars, but will still be multiplying exceptions, and inventing shifts to oppose truth, and even make use of satisfactory answers given to former objections, to ground new cavils and objections: Paul points out the nature of such men, by his thus personating them in proposing objections. Paul would not have answered such objections, if he had not foreseen, that there would have been some who would have been ready to have framed such objections.

II. As ministers ought to be clear in their doctrine, and leave no doubt in the hearts of their hearers, touching the truth of what they assert, but be at pains to remove all scruples; so ought they to use much patience and longanimity towards contradictors, 2 Tim. ii. 24. 25. and condescend

descend to satisfy them in every particular, so far as is possible; as Paul's example teacheth us here, who leaveth no objection unloosed.

III. As it is no new thing to see men and women laying all the blame of their sin and misery upon God, who has appointed and made such a law that he foresaw they would break, by which they stand condemned and guilty of everlasting death, so that the truth be loadened with never so many malicious slanders, we ought not to quite it, seeing in ~~and~~ all will be found groundless: for it was here objected, that from Paul's doctrine it would follow that God and his law was to be blamed for the death that man is liable unto: *Was that then which is good, made death, &c.*

IV. Such is our folly and madness, that unless the law should promise and hold forth life unto us, do what we please, it can never be good in our eyes, and looked upon as profitable unto us; for the objectors would not have *the law to be good*, upon this ground, because *it was made death*, tho' that was only because of their transgressing of it.

V. Whatever slanders wicked malicious enemies endeavour to raise against the truths of God, yet it becometh the servants of the Lord to be diligent and faithful in wiping these off, and to wipe them so off, as all may be convinced their very soul abhorreth such slanderous untruths: therefore doth Paul wipe off this aspersion with a *God forbid*.

VI. Whatever misery befall men here or hereafter, that goeth under the name of death, it is wholly to be imputed unto sin, as the procuring cause; therefore saith he, *but sin*; that is, it was sin that was made death, or did procure it.

VII. As the law maketh sin known, so the more actively corruption within rages, when opposed by a law, the more it kyths in its own colours, and appeareth to be what indeed it is; and the stirring of cor-

ruption at the occasion of the law's hemming of it in, may abundantly convince us of its vile and sinful nature; therefore is it added, *that it might appear sin, working death in me, by that which is good.*

VIII. Corruption is never rightly taken up, nor seen in its own colours, until it appear unto the soul to be beyond measure sinful; for he addeth, by way of exegesis, *That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*

VERSE 14. *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

BEfore we proceed farther, to avoid tediousness, and to cut out our way shorter in speaking to the following verses, there is a necessity we stay a little on the discussing of a great question, touching the meaning of the following verses, *viz.* Whether Paul speaketh of himself as regenerate, or not. Pelagians, Socinians, and Arminians, (who all speak too favourably of man's free will, now corrupted,) deny that he speaketh of himself as regenerate, and in the state of grace, and we purpose to clear the contrary; I. By clearing the grounds for what we hold; and then, II. By disproving their grounds for the contrary. Only, to avoid repetition, we intend not to speak to the clearing of our main grounds, taken out of the following verses, where we will find many particulars which only must be meant of the regenerate, until we come to them in the explication; where also we shall clear, how these things that our adversaries suppose no way to agree to the regenerate, may well be meant of them. We say then that the apostle, in the following part of this chapter, speaketh of himself as regenerate:

1st. Because it is clear, that he speaketh of himself always in the first person thro' these twelve verses; and there is nothing in the text which will necessitate us

to look upon him as personating another, which is always to be found when there is such a personating. And that he speaketh of himself as regenerate is clear, because he speaketh of himself now in the present time, and not in the bypast, as he did before; there is a clear change of the time here thro' this whole chapter, speaking still of some present exercise, and sure it cannot therefore be meant of him while unregenerate, otherways why should he have used the preterite time when he was speaking of his unregenerate state, verses 8. 9. 10. 11. might he not as well have spoken what there is spoken in the present time, after this manner; *I do not know sin but by the law; I do not know concupiscence; Sin works in me all manner of concupiscence; I am alive without the law once, but when the commandment comes, sin revives and I die, &c.* Doth not that once look back to some time before? and how could Paul be both dead and alive at one time? how could sin be both dead and revive at one time? This argument will be farther strengthened, by considering, (as we shewed) that the apostle, in answering these objections from verse 7. is still bringing forth his own experience, that he may be seen to speak nothing but what he knoweth to be truth from his own experience; and so he cannot be thought to personate another, and then when there is a manifest change of the person before speaking of himself, as while a Pharisee in the preterite time, and now using the present time all alongst, he must be understood to speak of himself as regenerate.

2dly, Because the contrary opinion, as we suppose, doth much strain the analysis, and thwart with the apostle's scope; for they make this part of the chapter, from the beginning of the 14th verse, to be taken up in rendering a reason; and of what? of that which is set down verse 5. *that the motions of sin doth work in their members who are in the flesh*; and that which is casten in, verse 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. say they, serveth

to explain this proposition. Whereas, 1. We conceive there is no colour of reason to be given why we should take that which is set down, verse 4. as a proposition of such a nature as needeth so large an explication and confirmation; seeing it is brought in as an undeniable medium by which he presseth holiness upon believers, to this purpose: While you was under the tutory of another husband, unregenerate, you was busy working and bringing forth fruit, and therefore it is reasonable you should be as busy and fruitful under this new husband. Now, who in reason could deny the first? 2. Beside that, we think it hard to imagine the apostle to repeat the same argument which he brought before, chapter vi. 14. which our adversaries do, making this all one with what is couched in here, viz. that *sin hath dominion over such as are under the law.* 3. It is more clear to take these words, verse 14. to have immediate connection with the words going before, than to cast them to these words, verse 5. seeing there is no hint in the text for such a thing. 4. By this means, these words, *for the law is spiritual*, verse 14. should not have the force of any reason, (the reason lying only in the end of the verse, according to their exposition,) whereas the very reading of the words will force us to the contrary.

3dly, Because our adversaries themselves are found to acknowledge, that verse last, where the apostle says, *I thank God thro' Jesus Christ*, he speaketh in his own proper person, being now delivered from the body of death; and why may not we take the preceding verses to be meant so also, seeing there can no ground in the world be alledged out of the text, why these words in this verse, must be so taken, and no more; for always he speaketh of himself in the first person.

4thly, Because of that word, verse last, *I myself serve the law of God*, not only, says he, *I*, but *I myself*; and it were hard to take the meaning to be this, *the self same*

I, (the other) of whom I was speaking: which gloss our adversaries put upon this word, strengthening themselves from this, that he useth the pronoun *I*, verses 8. 9. 10. where indeed, it is true, he speaketh of himself, but not in the present time, as here, but in the preterite.

5thly, Because these for the contrary opinion lay down that for a ground which cannot be granted, viz. That there is a threefold state of man, viz. a state of nature under the law, a state of grace, and a distinct state from both, viz. when a soul is under the legal work, and so prepared for welcoming the gospel, and laying hold on the promises, which they call an *unconstant state*, unto which all this that is here said is by them applied. The scripture speaketh only of two, viz. the state of nature, and the state of grace; and they, seeing that what the apostle is here speaking of himself, cannot be meant of one in black nature, have therefore feigned this third state without scripture, and to help the matter, call it only an *unconstant state*. I say, the scripture knoweth no such third state, distinct from the other two; for whatever legal terrors be upon the conscience of a sinner, until the promise be gripped, and Christ in the gospel laid hold on, the man is still in nature; he may be indeed nearer the kingdom of heaven than when he was living in all profanity, but yet still out of it, and in the kingdom of darkness. It is true, there are different degrees, but to feign distinct states upon that score, were to lay a foundation, not only for three states, but for three and three too: for as some are most profane, running loose to all riotousness; so some are more civil in their carriage; some not only civil, but externally religious, and painted hypocrites; some not only deceiving others, but also deceiving themselves; some under light convictions, and some drinking deeper of that cup; and yet all of them under sin, and the children of wrath: So of these under grace, some babes, some

young men, and some old men. Nor has this fiction of a threefold distinct state, any ground from Rev. iii. 15. 16. as is supposed; for these luke-warm people were still in the state of nature, though not so gross as might be called *cold*; and sure it is, that these luke-warm Laodiceans were no way legally exercised, and under the terrors of the law; but having renounced Heathenism, and received a form of religion, they rested without the power and life thereof, and so were plain hypocrites. Thus then we have a fourth distinct state, if there be three here. And though Christ call upon the *weary* and the *heavy laden*, yet it will not follow, that these are in a distinct state from nature: gradual differences will not make specifical differences.

6thly, Because the contrary opinion will leave us in the mist, and at an uncertainty where to sit, or of what kind of folks in nature to take these here spoken of. It is true, they mean one who is under the law, that is, as they expone it, under the terrors of the law; but can these things here be spoken of a Cain and Judas, and other reprobates, who were under strong terrors and legal fits, and died in them? I cannot think it; for, to say no more, it is scarce probable, that such can really consent unto the law that it is good, verse 16. and not rather wish from their hearts there were no such law above their heads. Can any imagine, that such do delight in the law of God, after the inward man? Sure I am of one thing, that that word, verse 25. *I thank God, through Jesus Christ*, speaks small comfort to them. Now, are not these in this third state? or is it peculiar unto such who shall at length be delivered from it? If so, what reason can be brought for this? is not the one under the law (for so they call this third state,) as well as the other? or if not, let them shew better what it is to be under the law: Sure, if we take that exposition which they give, viz. that he is under the law, who has the knowledge of the law; who

who have their thoughts accusing and excusing them; who know that lust is a sin, the matter will be worse yet, for that will appear another distinct state; for many such are utterly strangers to the work of the law upon their own consciences, and are not such as are heavy laden, and sinners in their own eyes, and so are in another state than these: and will not this agree even to a Judas, or a Cain? And if it be said, that this non-consistent state is rather a degree from one state to another; as from the state of nature unto the state of grace, according to which degree, that man may be called, *one in bearing*; for there is too large a distance from the one state to the other, without some degrees betwixt them. I answer, 1. A man in these mid degrees is either in nature or grace, or in neither; if in neither, then why should it not be called a state distinct from both, seeing even in these states there is degrees? If in either; then there is but two states. 2. It is true, that there is a transition from the one state to the other; but still, I say, until Christ be clasped about; the man is still under nature; as is clear from many places of scripture; take these few, Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 34. Rom. xiv. 23. Heb. xi. 6. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. John v. 12. Rom. viii. 9. 3. Then it will follow, that all in that third state, or mid degree, shall be certainly saved, contrary to what was said before, or else we must have another description of such than as yet we have seen; for the objection saith, that such in that degree are, or may be called, *in bearing*; or *such as are about to be born*; and certain it is, that many who ly within the compass of the descriptions of those in that degree, which we have hitherto got shall never be born again. If again any shall say, it is to be understood of such who have saving qualifications, as hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which are so acceptable unto God, as that therefore he will communicate unto them saving grace, as faith, &c. I an-

swer, 1. There can no such qualifications be given that may be called saving, that is, such as have salvation necessarily following them, before the soul close with Christ: For, (1.) the tenor of the gospel is, *Whoever believeth shall be saved*; (2.) such a one *without faith cannot please God*, Heb. xi. 6. yea, he is such as has wrath spoken to him, Mark xvi. 16. and is *under the curse*, Gal. iii. 13. 2. Even such, according to their judgment, may never be born; for, say they, it is left to their own free will to believe or not believe; and if so, that they will believe is but a *may be*, and this may bear a *may not be*.

7thly, The contrary opinion, viz. That Paul speaks of a man *under the law*, that is in this third state, or mid degree, is such as cannot be cleared from their interpretation, which is such as will agree as well to such as are *without the law*, (as they are pleased to make the distinction;) For, 1. They explain these words, verse 15. of a combat betwixt the flesh and a natural conscience; such a combat this is, as hath place (even by their own confession) in all who *know good and evil, right and wrong*; who *have the work of the law written in their hearts*; *their thoughts accusing and excusing*, Rom. ii. 15; *who hold the truth in unrighteousness*, Rom. i. 18. Now, this is meant of Heathens, who have nothing but the light of nature to guide them, and are without the law, as is clear in that first and second of the Romans; now, tell me if such cry out, as he doth of whom the apostle meaneth, verse 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me, &c.* 2. After the same manner do they explain verse 16. citing the forecited first and second chapters of this same epistle for confirmation. 3. They take *consenting unto the law*, not for *approving*, but *esteeming*; and this may be spoken of many more than such as they will have here meant. But they say, this *consenting unto the law* is not according to the *flesh*, but as they are *under the law*. I answer, (1.) This

is a distinction altogether without ground; for, as we shewed before, there can be no medium betwixt flesh and grace, so as if any thing could be done that neither was from the flesh, nor from grace, as its principle. (2.) It must be from the flesh, because themselves say, that such a man is not yet regenerated, and while a man is unregenerated, he is in his old state of nature; they say, the state of unregeneration containeth two other states, *viz. without the law, and under the law*; so that whether what is done be done by them while under the law, or while without the law, it is still done by them in a state of unregeneration, and so without grace, and consequently the flesh must be the principle thereof; for I know not of a third principle beside nature or flesh, and grace. 4. In explaining verse 18. they say, that in the unregenerated there is something beside flesh, *viz. a mind taking up that which may be known of God, &c.* Rom. i. and ii. and if so, sure this agreeth to many more than are here meant by them, and so their distinction of such as are *without the law*, and such as are *under the law*, is needless, and to no purpose. 5. In explaining verse 22. they say, that the *inner man* is not the regenerate part of a man, but the immortal part, and invisible, and that is the soul; and so the man meant here, must be every man who hath a soul, which these *without the law*, as well as these *under the law* have. 6. In like manner they explain *the law of the mind*, ver. 23. *the knowledge of the law, thoughts accusing and excusing, and the knowledge of lust to be sin.*

8thly, They who maintain the contrary opinion, are forced to interpretations that can hardly be understood, if not worse: as, for example, they explain these words, *It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*, thus, *It is not I as under the law, but I as carnal, and a servant to sin.* Now, what can the meaning of that be, *I as under the law*? They explain it

to be this, *I as consenting to the law*; and this is as unclear as the other. But it is not every distinct respect that can found such a proposition as this, *I do this, yet not I, but sin in me*; or, *I do this as such, but not as such*; otherways in one even *without the law* the same may be verified; for such a one may be said to sin as carnal, but not as such or such a man, in such or such a place, &c. therefore, they must be such distinct respects as are principles of such actions: as, for example, (taking but what themselves say) in the regenerate there is a principle of grace, and this is operative of good, and active in producing it, and never consenteth unto what is ill, nor contributeth any assistance thereto: Also, there is the reliques of the old man, and that is a principle of evil; this is busy in bringing forth sin, and never is assistant to what is good; so that here when the man sineth he may be said to sin, not as having a principle of grace, or as regenerated, but as having the reliques of corruption within him; so when he doth well, he may be said to do it, not as carnal, but as regenerated. But now, to speak of a man unregenerate, and say, he sineth not as under the law, but as carnal, is, in my judgment, to speak contradictions; for, (1.) even as under the law he is unregenerated, seeing they themselves divide the state of unregeneracy into a lesser state without the law, and under the law; and so it were to say, he sineth not as unregenerate, but as unregenerate. 2. Doth their being under the law give them a new principle of action, not only distinct, but contrary unto the principle of nature? how shall this be got proven? 3. Where is it said, that a man under the law doth not sin as such? 4. If *as consenting unto the law*, or *as being under the law*, (for these are one with them) they did not sin, then as such they had something in them opposite to sin, entering a protestation against it, resisting it, &c. for how else could they be said not to sin as such, unless

less as such they had some impediment lying in their way, something standing in opposition to sin, and if so, then they should have grace; for what can resist, oppose, hinder, and counter-work sin but grace? and if they have grace, then are they regenerated, for grace is peculiar to such; and so we are where we would be, and to be under the law, (though there be a great mistake in the word,) is to be under grace.

II. We come now to speak unto their grounds, and to answer their objections: And,

First, They object this, That the connection will make against us, thus, The apostle must mean the same man here by the pronoun *I*, that he meaneth by it in the former verses, because the connection *for*, sheweth that the same purpose is handled here, which was handled before; but in the former verses he spoke of a man *under the law*, and there can no connection be imagined if we understand this of a regenerate man.

1st, I answer, It is true the particle *for* will knit this with the preceding verses; but it will not follow, that therefore he must understand the same man he spoke of before, because the connection will stand tho' that be not, as we shall show.

2dly, If this must be knit unto the former purpose, and if the former purpose was concerning a man *under the law*, then we cannot look upon it as the rendering of a cause of that which is set down, verse 5. where the apostle is speaking of one in the flesh, and if such an one be the man that is said to be under the law, then I am sure their distinction of such as are without the law, and such as are under the law, is but a fiction; for these without the law are in the flesh, no less than these under the law, if not more: and thus their analysis shall fall to the ground.

3dly, Tho' we understand here a regenerate man, yet we think there may be a clear connection thus; The apostle having

asserted two things, verse 13. in answering of that objection proposed, *viz.* 1. That the law is the cause of death; and 2. that it is corruption which is always strong, even so strong as to take occasion to sin even at the very law itself, he clearth and confirmeth both here. *The law is spiritual*, says that it is not the cause of death. And the other he proveth thus; Corruption is so strong even in me while regenerated, that in part I may be called *carnal, sold under sin*; therefore it cannot but be strong in others. So that this is an affirmative argument from the greater to the lesser. Now I would gladly know what inconvenience is in this connection.

Secondly, They object, That our opinion is injurious to God's free grace, because it ascribes less to it than ought to be ascribed; scripture ascribes to grace not only that it worketh the will, but also the deed, Phil. ii. 13. *it crucifieth the old man*, &c. Rom. vi. 6. *mortifieth the deeds of the body*, Rom. viii. 13. and maketh believers victorious, Eph. vi. 10. James iv. 6. 1 John iv. 4. and v. 4. but we (say they) make the Spirit of God to be weaker than corruption, because the event of this battle is to corruption's advantage.

1st, I answer; It is granted, that the Spirit of God makes *both to will and to do*; but will it follow, that every action which the believer doth is wrought by the Spirit? Was David's adultery, and Peter's denying of his Master, wrought by grace, not only as to the willing of it, but also as to the effectuating of it? I suppose this will not be said: The meaning then of these words is, That we must ascribe to God's grace altogether any good which we do, both as to the beginning and perfecting of any good work; so that notwithstanding of this, believers may often sin against God, as sad experience daily evinceth; and to say that they sin so with full consent of the will, without any protestation to the contrary, is easily said, but not so easily proven.

2dly, It is true, the old man is upon the dying hand, but is not quite dead, nor will be till death, and therefore there will still be room left for these exhortations, and occasion to go about these duties in the strength of the Lord; unless we would say, that believers might attain to that degree of perfection, as to be void of sin and corruption, and so have no corruption to be mortified; or crucified, which is against all scripture and experience too.

3dly, It is groundlessly said, that grace makes believers so victorious, as that they shall never be foiled, nor commit sin, seeing experience proves the contrary: They are indeed victorious in this respect, that although corruption prevail at a time, it is with a battle; and ere long they shall get up their head again, and bid corruption battle anew; and at length shall so gain the day, as corruption shall never be able to rally: they that are victors on the set day of battle, may have received the worse at many particular skirmishes before. Believers shall indeed have the victory, and that shall be brought to pass which is written, *Hos. xiii. 14. I will ransom them from the power of the grave, &c. Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory; But when? not until corruption hath put on incorruption, 1 Cor. xv. 54. 55. 56. 57.*

4thly, Whereas they say, that hereby we make corruption stronger than the Spirit. I answer, 1. I hope they will not deny, that David and Peter were regenerated; and now when they sined, I ask, whether grace or the Spirit of God made any opposition, and did resist? If the Spirit did resist, and yet the fact was committed; then it is clear, that they must grant this same absurdity: But if they say, The Spirit did not once mutter or peep against corruption; then I am sure, they must far more yield the Spirit to be weakest, be-

cause he is a far weaker party that dare not make head, than he that dare come to the field and is beaten; and if corruption prevail so far, as grace shall not in the least make any resistance, sure it must be far stronger than grace, yea, and far more strong, than if grace should resist, and be overcome. Now, whether they that say, corruption doth so prevail, as grace dare not stir against it; or we that say, grace will never yield, the Spirit will never give over, but, though it should be put to the worse at one time, will try it again and again; be most injurious to the Spirit, let any man judge. 2. May it not fall out so, that the weakest party may at a time have the better? And so tho' corruption may now and then prevail, may not the Spirit be strongest notwithstanding? 3. As I said before, the power of the Spirit over corruption, or of corruption over the Spirit, is not to be estimate from one or two single acts; but herein doth the power of the Spirit appear, in that let corruption lay believers never so oft upon their back, the Spirit shall raise them up by repentance, and shall so preserve them, that they shall not fully and finally fall away. But 4. can it be denied, that regenerate men may sin wittingly? I hope, not; Then I ask, doth corruption prevail so far as the Spirit can make no opposition? or is the Spirit quite gone from the man? Some of these must be granted, or else that there is a reluctancy and opposition; for they will not say, that the regenerate part goes along with corruption, who blame us for saying, That the Spirit opposeth, and yet the deed is done, as wronging the Spirit. If the Spirit remains, and yet makes no opposition, that is, either because it will not, or because it is not able by reason of the strength of corruption: and whatsoever they say here, we are sure they shall do more injury to the Spirit of grace than we do. If they say, the Spirit is quite gone; Then 1. this must be a punishment, and so it must be for some crime committed,

committed, and so because corruption is so strong, it must leave the house; and whether hereby corruption or the Spirit is said to be the strongest, any body may judge, when corruption is so strong as to banish the Spirit to the door. 2. To say, that the Spirit doth totally leave believers, is an assertion that will not be easily proven, seeing the seed remaineth, and the Lord has promised, that the Spirit shall not depart from them for ever; see Isa. lix. 21.

3. Sure it were intolerable to say, that the Spirit left believers totally at every sin which they wittingly commit. And 4. especially, when they dare not affirm, that the Spirit did totally leave David, when he committed that gross iniquity of adultery and murder both. Thus then, whatever difficulties our adversaries think to straiten us with, do entangle themselves no less than us.

Thirdly, But they say, We will shun all difficulties thus; *The law of the mind, that is, the conscience, convinced of the equity of the law, striving against the law of the members, is overcome, because weaker.*

I answer, This is not all the battle that is in the regenerated; For 1, though the man's mind does withstand and oppose, if there be no more, he cannot be said to will that which he doth not, or nill that which he doth; for willing and nilling are acts of the will, and not of the understanding; the understanding only points forth what is right and what is wrong; but tho' a man know what is right or wrong, he cannot be said to will or not will it, unless his will consent or dissent. 2. The regenerate are said sometimes not to do that evil which they would, Gal. v. 17. viz. which their carnal part would do; now, this willingness cannot be a mere act of the understanding. 3. But still this difficulty sticks, How can it be that the Spirit of God in the will (for themselves grant, that the Spirit possesses the whole man in part, and not some few faculties or parts, leaving the rest in black nature) can suffer sin

to be committed, and not withstand it in some measure? But moreover, seeing it cannot be denied, but that the mind or conscience of the regenerated man is in part renewed, how comes it that the law of their members doth overcome the Spirit there? Shall it be a disgrace to the Spirit to say it is overcome, as it acteth in the will, and shall it not be a disgrace to the Spirit to say it is overcome, as it acteth in the understanding?

Fourthly, But yet, say they, *We grant, that the regenerate persons may sometimes, tho' seldom, sin against their will; but this place speaketh of an ordinary way of sinning: for the apostle speaks indefinitely, without any limitation.*

I answer, This is not altogether to free themselves of that crime which they would fasten upon us: for sure it must be an indignity to the Spirit, according to their constant language, to be once overcome in the conflict: for *maius et minus non variant speciem.*

Fifthly, But, say they, The regenerate man doth not will the good which he doth not, with a full and complete consent of the will, or such as followeth the last judgment of the intellect; but with an incomplete will, and which may be called a volition or a volition.

I answer, 1. The apostle speaks of no volition or nolition, or such incomplete consenting of the will; but says, *What I would, that do I not, &c. and what I would not, that I do.* 2. Whether is that volition an act of grace, or not, or that nolition, or not? then it is done either with, or without the Spirit; if with, then it is of grace; if without the Spirit, either it is a sin, or no sin; if no sin, then grace works not in us both to will and to do; if it be a sin, then it must be because it is defective, and not fuller or completer. And 3. how comes it to pass that it is so? Doth not the Spirit resist in this, or oppose such an imperfect volition, which is a sin? if it do oppose, we have our intent;

rent; if it do not, this must be, because it cannot, thro' the strength of corruption: and what a piece of honour this is to the Spirit, let any judge.

Sixthly, Again they object and say, This exposition is an enemy to good works, because they are hereby made to applaud themselves in their sins and wicked courses, and conclude themselves into a state of regeneration, because they find that they sin oftentimes against their consciences and wills, and the apostle, say they, makes this proper to the regenerate to sin with a combat.

Answer 1. It is no new thing to see wasps sucking poison out of those flowers from which bees would suck honey; nor is this the only truth which the wicked turn into poison to themselves: Would we reject all truths which the wicked do thus abuse, there would be few left behind. It is well known how oft the apostle Paul had to do with such, whose pernicious inferences he is constrained, as it were, to step aside to remove; and consider but this same epistle to the Romans, and it shall be found so: And as the apostle did not quit the truth asserted, because of their blasphemous inferences; so neither ought we. Let wicked men abuse it as they please, sure we are it will be to their own perdition. 2. There is no ground for any such inference; because we do not say that every struggling is that combat which is peculiar unto the children of God: There may be a struggling in the wicked, which is not here meant nor spoken of; a struggling of one carnal faculty against another, which may indeed look like this, and which they may take to be this named here; but if they mistake, and take their marks by the moon, themselves are only to be blamed. Because many presume they have faith, when they have none, and so harden their hearts in wickedness, shall the godly therefore cast at their faith, and not take it for an evidence that they are in grace? What reason is there for that! Further, though there

might be many differences betwixt this combat and that struggling in the wicked mentioned; yet those few out of the very text may suffice; and so if any do deceive themselves, they may blame none but themselves. As, 1. This combat is not betwixt the carnal understanding, or carnal affections, and the will, as it is in the wicked, but it is in the understanding consenting and not consenting; in the affections hating and loving; and in the will willing and nilling. 2. The carnal man's heart never heartily complieth with the law, as God's law, whether it cross his temper or not; but the godly, even when they cannot win up to the law, consent to it as good in itself, and as holy, a law that should direct them to more and more conformity unto the Lord's mind. 3. Yea, the carnal man never delighteth in the law, but the regenerate doth. 4. The carnal man would gladly have the sin committed, or the duty left undone; but with peace and quietness; and if his conscience would suffer him, he would never stand on sin; but the regenerate man is groaning under a body of death, and accounts himself a miserable man that is thus drawn to sin and iniquity against his renewed will. 5. The carnal man can never expect relief to his case from Christ, for all that he would be at, is a peaceable quietness in himself, when he would sin against God, and not that he may be restrained from sin; unless for some carnal advantage; but the regenerate person can expect deliverance and freedom from the trouble he is in from Christ, being conscious to himself that his end is honest. 6. The carnal man is never crying out of a body of death, and his innate corruption, nor never follows up any evil until this spring; but the believer levels mainly at this, and groans most under it; knowing that as long as this is strong, it will still be sending out streams, at one place when stoped at another, and so still breed him sorrow, he cries out, *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* But all these will be

be more largely spoken to in the doctrines, and possibly then we shall find more particulars.

Having thus far digressed for facilitating our way in explicating what followeth, we come now to our purpose. And in this verse the apostle confirmeth both these things he had spoken, verse 13. in answering of the objection there proposed. His two assertions were these, 1. That the law is not death, nor the cause of death; and this he proveth thus, *The law is spiritual*, and for this he appealeth to themselves, it being a truth so clear, that none needed to deny it; *we know*, says he, it is a commonly known and received truth. 2. The other was, That corruption is so strong that it works death, even by the commandment which is good: and this he confirmeth thus, *but I am carnal, sold under sin*; and in this he maketh use of his own experience; *I am*, says he. The first argument runneth thus, That which is spiritual in pointing out the way to life, is not the cause of death: But the law is spiritual in pointing forth a heavenly and spiritual life, and the way how a soul may attain unto the everlasting possession of the life of glory; Therefore, &c. The next argument may be taken up thus, If corruption be so strong and powerful, even in the regenerate, who are partly spiritual, and do so possess in part all the principles and faculties of the soul, as mind, will and affections, as they may be called *carnal*; Then it cannot but work death by that which was good, and so become exceeding sinful: The reason is, because, if corruption be so strong in the regenerate, whose mind, will, and affections are renewed, and in part spiritual; it will be much more strong in the unregenerate, who are all flesh, and altogether without the Spirit: But the former is true; Therefore, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The mistaking, and not right taking up of the nature of God's ways and works,

and in particular, of the law which he hath appointed and ordained, is the cause why people are so ready to lay the blame of their sin and misery off themselves, and on God and his ways; for their mistaking the nature of the law made them lay the blame of their death upon it, and therefore the apostle correcteth their mistake, and says, *The law is spiritual*.

II. The law of God was appointed for a holy and a heavenly end, to direct man both as to the outward and inward part, how to walk with God in a holy, heavenly, lively, and spiritual manner, in thought, word, and action, and thereby at length to win to a constant and glorious life in heaven; however now by reason of our transgressions, it cannot reach that end, yet this is the nature of it; and therefore it is free of the blood of all men: *The law is spiritual*, and therefore is not the cause of death.

III. Albeit the regenerate be not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, Rom. viii. 9. that is, wholly and altogether carnal, and nothing but that, (as to be in sin, John ix. 34. 1 John v. 19. and in the gall of bitterness, &c. Acts viii. 23. signifieth to be altogether such:) and are led by the Spirit of God, and walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, Rom. viii. 4. that is, they do not propose the flesh, and the things of the flesh, as their scope and end in their daily walk, and the rule according to which they steer their course; yet seeing they are but in part renewed, and not fully and perfectly regenerated, but the remnants of corruption are still cleaving as burrs unto the best, for their continual exercise, in humility, watchfulness, prayer, faith, and other graces; they are in part carnal, and bear that name, so that it is still their duty to put off the old man, with his deceitful lusts, Eph. iv. 22. 23. 24. Col. iii. 9. 10. and still will be until they come unto the unity of the faith, and unto the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness

fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13. not that in one faculty they are *renewed altogether*, and in another altogether *carnal*; but in every faculty and principle there is something of the new man, and something of the old; and so in respect of what is renewed they are *spiritual*, and in respect of what is flesh they are *carnal*; so then they are not called *carnal* upon this account that the flesh is still predominant, (for the flesh is not so in them, but tho' sometimes, yea often, it prevails and draws the soul to sin; yet grace and the new man is growing daily, and corruption decaying, and so in respect of the man's whole progress and walk the Spirit is predominant, and at death shall fully and finally overcome) but because there is some fleshly corruption in them, otherways they could not get this name, as we see they do, 1 Cor. iii. 1. (tho' they are oftener stiled by the other part which is the better, *spiritual*) where such as are babes in Christ, and consequently regenerate, are stiled *carnal*, whether because they were rude in knowledge, or because they were given to contentions and divisions, it is all a matter, seeing they were babes in Christ, and are called carnal from the remnant of corruption kything in their ignorance, (for the best know but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9.) or in their scandalous divisions.

IV. A soul should be so far from questioning its interest in Christ, because it seeth so much corruption in itself, and so much of the old man in life within it, that the more it see of this savingly, the more it may be convinced of the grace of God in it: for it is only grace that wins to a right sight of corruption; even a Paul crieth out, *I am carnal*.

V. So long as folks lose sight of the law, or mistake its nature, and look not on it as spiritual, reaching the soul, little wonder though they mistake themselves: The law rightly taken up, will make the best look upon themselves as carnal, when compared with the law: *The law is spi-*

ritual, says Paul; and then presently addeth, *but I am carnal*.

VI. So far should the wicked be from applauding and blessing themselves, as being in a safe case and condition, when they see so much corruption breaking out in the godly; that, on the contrary, they should so much the more be convinced of their own vileness, and of the exceeding sinfulness of their corruption: the outbreakings of the godly should be a looking-glass to them, wherein they may read their own abominableness, and the exceeding great strength of corruption within themselves: for to prove the strength of corruption, he bringeth in his own case while now regenerated, and says, *I am carnal*.

VII. Albeit the godly be not wholly sold to sin and given to wickedness, as was that wicked man Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 20. *Who sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord*; but are now *delivered from sin*, Rom. vi. 17. 18. as their beloved master, and that by Christ, John viii. 36. and *led by the Spirit*, Gal. v. 18.; yet they are not wholly freed from the tyrannical oppression of sin, but as a tyrant without title, it still molests and keeps them at under, and that fore against their will; so that they can have no rest or ease, but are still forced to a battle: so says Paul, *he was sold under sin*; not as if they were servants or willing slaves absolutely; for that cannot consist with their state of freedom, Rom. vi. otherways, if sin were their work, and if they were industriously labouring to adorn, and curiously to set it forth with all their skill, then should they become the servants of it, John viii. 34. but because they are still vexed therewith, and forced to many things by it against their mind, and so in part only, and not wholly, they are sold under sin, viz. in so far as unrenewed.

VERSE 15. *For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

THrough the rest of this chapter, the apostle doth at large confirm what he had said last, touching the condition of the regenerate, viz. how they were carnal, sold under sin, and all in his own experience, by setting down the sad conflict between the regenerate part and the unregenerate, in some sharp fits, withal adding some grounds of consolation for the supporting and comforting of the godly under these fits of distemper. And 1. There is a discord betwixt his *judgment* and his *actions*. And 2. A discord betwixt his *will* and his *actions*; the one confirming the other, and both confirming, that he *was sold under sin*: Therefore, says he, *that which I do I allow not*; many things I do which I approve not of, but look upon as base and beastly, my mind is not on them, I think little good of them, I no way esteem of them: and seeing sin prevaieth so far with me, as that I commit these actions, which my mind as renewed approveth not, I am in so far sold under sin. Again he confirmeth, that he *allowed not that which he did*, by adding, *for what I would, that do I not*; I would obey the law of God, but I am so clogged with sin, that I cannot get that done which I would gladly do; and I am so drawn away with strong corruption, that I am forced to do that which my renewed will lothes and abhors; and therefore it is yet clear that I am sold under sin. And moreover he adds, *But what I hate, that do I*; to shew yet more how he is staid, when mind, will and affections and all are contradicted, and he drawn against all these, that are as parties for God, to commit sin: and this is a third discord betwixt his affections and his actions.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. In the regenerate, God doth so far take possession of the whole man, that thro' the whole man there is a party for him, both in the mind, in the will, and in the affections: for here the regenerate man

alloweth not, willeth not, but hateth what is sin.

II. Albeit wicked unrenewed men may have so much of a natural conscience within them, as to oppose them, when their carnal lusts and affections are carrying them headlong; yet they have not a party in their minds for God, dissenting upon a right score, as owning God's interest in them: but this is peculiar unto the regenerate, who are renewed in part in the spirit of their minds, to dissent from, and disallow that which the current of temptation, together with the strength of corruption, driveth them to: *That which I do, I allow not*, saith Paul.

III. Tho' God has promised to work in his own, both to will and to do, and will do it in his own time and manner; yet it hath seemed good in his eyes, for wise and holy ends, so to order things in his holy and wise dispensations, as that often-times corruption should so prevail, as to drive them to the contrary of that which their renewed wills are for, and to hold back from that which their wills would be at: Therefore says he, *what I would, that do I not*.

IV. So much unrenewed corruption is in the best, that when God withdraws his hand, it will drive a believer to that which his soul abhorreth: *for what he hates, that he doth*.

V. In the best, they being renewed but in part, corruption has a strong party thro' the whole man, mind, will, and affection: for there can nothing be actually done, but what the mind in some measure assenteth unto, and the will yieldeth unto, and the affections contribute their concurrence; thus *doing* and *not doing* supposeth this.

VI. Hence the regenerate man is still twosome, having contrary parties, not lying in distinct quarters, (so to speak) but in one and the same house and place of abode; which maketh their case so much the sadder, that in the same powers and faculties of the soul there should be such
sworn

sworn irreconcilable enemies: for what he esteemeth not and hateth, he esteemeth and loveth so as to do; and what he willeth, he so nilleth as to leave undone.

VII. This party which is in the regenerate, for sin and Satan, is not idle, but so active and maliciously set, as to oppose and contradict, yea, and counteract what the renewed part would be at; so what the renewed part *willeth not*, but *hateth*, it *doeth*; and what the renewed part *willeth and approveth*, it *doth not*, viz. when it getteth the better in the combat.

VIII. However corruption may so far prevail in the best, as to draw them to gross scandalous sins, as in David and Solomon; and to strange iniquities, as we see in Peter; yet it never so far prevailteth as to carry the whole man with it, but still the renewed part in the mind is dissenting, and the will as renewed, is protesting to the contrary, and the affections are setting their feet aspart in so far as sanctified; so that they never sin with full consent and their whole will: They *hate* and *will not*, but *disapprove* of the sin which they commit.

IX. It should strongly convince believers of their corrupted estate in part, and how corruption enslaveth them, to consider how they are driven on to sin, against mind, will, and affections: for this is the apostle's argument, whereby he confirmeth that *he was sold under sin*, because he did *what he allowed not, but hated*.

VERSES 16. 17. *If then, I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good.*

Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Hence the apostle draweth two confectaries following clearly upon, and flowing from what he said, verse 15. wherein he holdeth forth some grounds of comfort unto believers, while wrestling under the like conflict; and withal confirmeth these same two particulars, which he prov-

ed, verse 14. The first is, verse 16. *I consent unto the law, that it is good*; which he deduceth clearly from what he had said, thus, *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good*; that is, Seeing I am drawn to do that which is contrary to God's holy law, and which my soul hath no liking to, but acquiesceth in the holy law, and delighteth in the righteousness thereof, my heart consenteth unto the law that it is good; I can find no fault in it, but I approve of it as good, and as the only rule of righteousness: and this serveth to confirm what he said before, *we know that the law is spiritual*, albeit I be carnal, and so sold under sin, as that I do what I do not approve of, and consent not unto; yet I am persuaded the law is good, and my loving the contrary of what I do, says so much. This also holdeth forth matter of comfort to such wrestlers, who would be ready to question all as wrong, when they find themselves such slaves to corruption: Thus their hating, and not fully willing what they do, says, that they have right thoughts of the holy law of God, and that is an evidence that they are not void of the grace of God. The next is, verse 17. *Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin in me*: the particle *now then*, shews, that this is infered as the former, and it runneth thus; If I do that which I would not, it is not I as renewed, and according to that part which I own as myself, but sin in me; corruption, that is an opposing tyrant, with whom I do not account myself one, doth it: and hereby he confirmeth the other particular, viz. that *he is sold under sin*. This also holdeth out ground of comfort to wrestling believers, that seeing it is so they do what they would not, guilt shall not be laid to their charge, seeing it is not they, but their enemy that doth it.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Albeit such as have no more but the light of nature to walk by, may have some dark

dark knowledge of the common principles of equity, having such notions engraven on their heart, and there may be many within the visible church, who are utter strangers to the work of grace, who may have much literal knowledge of the law and mind of God; yet neither the one nor the other have any heart-approbation of the holy law of God, nor heartily welcome it as good, when it crosseth their corruptions: but this is peculiar to the godly, in so far as regenerated; *they consent unto the law, that it is good.*

II. This consenting unto the law, which is peculiar unto the regenerate part, is not such a consenting which necessity makes, and which the power of a natural light forceth; but such as floweth from the heart's complying with the things commanded or forbidden in the law: for this *consenting* is made out by *his doing that which he would not*

III. It is an evidence of grace in a soul, and may be ground of comfort unto them in the day when they are wrestling against a body of death, and are foiled, so as corruption doth prevail over them, and forceth them to do that which their renewed part protests against, and is averse from, that even then when they are foiled, and lying on the breadth of their back, their heart agrees with the law as holy, just, and good; that the law is to them a good law, in all its particulars, even when they cannot win up to conformity thereunto: for this is added as a ground of comfort, that *he consenteth unto the law, that it is good*, whereby others finding this same in themselves, when under the like exercise, may be comforted.

IV. The renewed part of the regenerate man doth withstand the committing of sin, and protests against it before it be committed; so when corruption hath prevailed, and laid the man in the mire, the renewed part is the first that appeareth in the field against it, and openly disowns it: for says the apostle, *it is no more I that do it.*

V. How strong ~~soever~~ the body of death, or corruption be, unto the believer; yet he never joins interests with it, he never looks upon it, as on his side, or one of his party, but still as some other thing than himself: for *it is no more I*, says he, *but sin.*

VI. The unrenewed part that is in the believer is not idle, and lying by, but is most active and stirring, and all its exercise is to finish and perfect sin, and so to cross and withstand the renewed part in all its motions and actions; for *it is sin that doth it.*

VII. Whatever guilt the poor believer be drawn into thro' the strength of corruption, his renewed part is always free thereof, grace hath no hand therein, but the sole cause thereof is corruption; and this original corruption should only bear the blame, and father its own breed: therefore says he, *It is no more I, but sin.*

VIII. Tho' graceless unbelievers be ready to abuse scripture to their own perdition, and this among others, cloaking their villany under this, that they ought not to be blamed therefore, but sin in them; yet none can with ground use this expression, but such as do not sin with their whole heart, but unwillingly, who have mind, will, and affections withstanding; and who, in the mean time even when worsted by corruption, consent unto the law as good; for of such an one is the apostle to be understood as speaking when he says, *It is no more I, but sin, &c.*

IX. When a soul is drawn, as by the hair, to sin, and after sin has been committed, is the first that casts a stone at himself, he may be comforted in this, that such transgressions shall not be imputed him, he not owning them; for this is another ground of comfort, that it shall not be accounted his deed, but another's.

X. Albeit believers, being in part renewed, are in so far temples of the Holy Ghost, and have the Spirit of God dwelling in them; yet their renovation not be

per-

perfect, corruption is a continual in-mate, keeping poſſeſſion, and will ſtill cleave cloſe to us, till corruption put on incorruption; hence ſin is ſaid to dwell in them, not as if it were full maſter and lord of the man; for there is a difference betwixt indwelling ſin and reigning ſin, (the reliques of corruption ſtill abide in us, but reign not) but becauſe it is not coming and going as a wayfaring man, but a conſtant reſidenter and indweller, withal tyrannizing and oppreſſing.

XI. It is no ſmall evidence of grace in a ſoul to get a right ſight of corruption within; and it is no leſs profitable to be viewing and ſeriously conſidering the ſame, ſeeing not only will the ſoul thereby be kepted humble and diligent, in the exerciſe of grace, and in the uſe of means, whereby it may grow in grace, but alſo it will thereby ſee the fountain of, and where to father a right, all its abominations; for the regenerate man, of whom the apoſtle is ſpeaking, ſees *ſin dwelling in him*, and ſo is helped to father ſin a right.

VERSES 18. 19. 20. *For I know, that in me (that is, in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.*

For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me.

THAT which the apoſtle ſaid laſt, viz. That ſin dwelleth in him, ſeemed ſomewhat unclear, and therefore he addeth ſomething here which tendereth to clear the ſame, and that brought from his own experience; and thus ſheweth a ſecond fit of diſtemper in the regenerate, cloſing it with the ſame comfortable iſſue which he cloſed the laſt with. There is here then a new fit of a regenerate perſon, containing a new diſcord or diſſention betwixt his will and his executive faculty; he found a prompt-

neſs in his will to that which was good, but great oppoſition and back wardneſs unto performance; *For to will is preſent, but how to perform that which is good I find not.* Now this is brought in to confirm what he ſpoke touching his corrupted nature; *For I know*, ſays he, *that in me (that is, in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing.* As if he would ſay, You think ſtrange that I ſay that ſin dwelleth in me, but I know from felt experience, that in my corrupted nature, *in my fleſh* (thus I muſt correct myſelf, would he ſay, leſt it ſhould ſeem injurious unto God's grace beſtowed upon me,) *dwelleth no good thing*; there is no good notion that hath any fixed and conſtant abode there. In verſe 19. is a proof of that which he ſaid, *To will is preſent with me*, &c. And verſe 20. containeth the comfortable outgate, as before.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Folks that are ſtrangers to their own hearts, and unacquainted with the duty of ſelf-examination, uſually have too good thoughts of themſelves, and a ſerious and ſincere viewing and ſteping in into our own hearts, and reflecting upon our ways, will bring us to a right ſight of our natural corruption; for Paul goeth in to his own heart and experience, when he is to prove that he was carnal, or had ſin dwelling in him, ſaying, *I know*, &c.

II. Natural people, who are altogether void of grace, may win to ſome common illumination of the Spirit, and to ſome raw, far-off apprehenſions of their natural corruption; but it is only grace that will give a thorough, clear, heart-affecting, and ſoul-humbling ſight of it: Believers, in ſo far as they are regenerated, will win to clear up-taking of their natural condition; for Paul, as a regenerated man, ſaith here, *I know*.

III. As grace is thus a ſharp ſighted, ſearching thing, ſo it is a humble and a heart-humbling thing; and the more a ſoul

soul have of it, the more low and base thoughts he has of himself, and the more ready is he to take with, and acknowledge his own shame, when it may tend to God's glory, and the good of his people, tho' it were but in the confirming of a truth: therefore Paul is not ashamed to say, *I know that, in me dwelleth no good thing, when he would prove, that sin dwelleth in him.*

IV. So sly and subtle is Satan, and so deceitful is the heart of the best, that they are in danger of wronging God and his grace, even when they are about a necessary and laudable duty of acknowledging their vileness; and therefore believers should carefully take heed, that when they are freely acknowledging their vile and abominable natures, they do not rub upon God's free grace, and leave any imputation thereupon, and miscall themselves to the dishonour of God and his grace in them: therefore while the apostle is saying, *I know, that in me dwelleth no good thing,* lest he should seem injurious unto God's grace, he correcteth himself, and saith, *that is, in my flesh.*

V. In believers, as there is much corruption, on the one hand, they not being completely renewed, so there is in them something that is contrary to this corruption, that is, not common gifts, as illumination, which is but the common work of the Spirit, nor *the work of the law written in the hearts* of Heathens, Rom. ii. 15. nor *a tasting of the heavenly gift,* Heb. vi. 4. 5. or *receiving the word with joy,* Matth. xiii. 20. and such like; (which, tho' good, if we speak comparatively, yet are they not such things as stand in direct opposition unto corruption, or the flesh; for even in these there is flesh, and nothing but flesh, however somewhat better polished;) but grace, which standeth in downright terms in opposition to sin and corruption: This correction of the apostle saith, there is something else than sin and flesh in him, even something that is contrary thereto;

so there is a renewed and an unrenewed part in him.

VI. As the believer is thus twofold, so some things may be true of him in one respect, which will not be true of him in another; some things may be spoken of him as regenerate, which will not agree to him as unrenewed; and, on the contrary, some things may agree to him as unrenewed, which would be false if spoken of him as renewed: for here, that *no good dwelleth in him* is true, if meant of *his flesh*, and unrenewed part, but false, if understood of his renewed part.

VII. This unrenewed part is wholly corrupt, filthy, and fleshly, without any spiritual life of grace; and, on the contrary, the renewed part is spiritual altogether, without any mixture of flesh among it: this his correction and calling the unrenewed part *flesh*, proveth; so that the apostle cannot mean here an unregenerate man under the law, for whatever common good may be said to be in them who are unrenewed and unconverted, it is never so clean of corruption and flesh, as that the apostle needed here help his speech, by saying, *I know, that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing;* for in these there is nothing to be looked upon as so opposite and contrary unto flesh as to partake nothing of it, take them up under what respect you please.

VIII. As these parts in the believer are, contrary unto each other themselves, so are they receptacles of contrary parties; as two contrary garrisons, tho' in one and the same kingdom, keep up two contrary parties; so, says he, *in my flesh dwelleth no good thing;* this garrison of corruption keepeth nothing but corrupt soldiers, and the other garrison of grace hath no such in it, but soldiers of another nature.

IX. As these principles are contrary one to the other in their own natures, and can never agree; so are they set to cross one another in every action which the poor believer goeth about; what the one will have

have done, the other will not have done; be it good or evil, each contribute their influence and forces to oppose the other, so that the believer gets nothing done but with a battle: therefore says he, *To will is present, but how to perform I know not: the good that I would, I do not, and the evil which I would not, I do.* See Gal. v. 17.

X. As by reason of this continual battle there is a mixture in the action, flowing from the several interests which these contrary principles have in it, by reason of the contrary influences which they have contributed thereto; so it is grace only, and grace in exercise, which will so discover this, as to give every one of these principles their own share; and believers should be careful to father every piece of the work aright for their own comfort, as Paul doth, who infereth, verse 20. *It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

XI. Albeit believers be often assisted by the Spirit of grace, and so far enabled as to be victors, and not only to will, but also to do what is good; yet it is not always so, but oftentimes it so falleth out, that they cannot do the good they would; and hereby abundantly it is evidenced, that there is corruption in the best, and that the flesh has no good will to any thing that is good: for this is the apostle's reason, *For to will is present, but how to perform that which is good I find not, &c.*

XII. Albeit this fleshy part of the believer be not idle, but busy in opposing the renewed part at the very beginning of any action; yet its opposition is more sensibly felt when it cometh to the execution; and therefore the apostle mentioneth it so: *How to perform that which is good, I find not; and I do what I would not, and do not what I would.*

XIII. Albeit the ungodly may have some willingness unto that which is morally good, God having, for the good of human societies, left some rude lineaments of his image in all by nature, which use and

culture polisheth better, and imprinted the fear of divine majesty, to keep them better in order; yet as to any spiritual good, or even that moral good in a spiritual manner, they have no inclination, but are altogether averse from: and this is peculiar unto the child of God, seeing it is only a good tree which bringeth forth good fruit. Nor is this love or desire unto what is spiritually good any whit the less to be suspected in them as not sincere, but counterfeit, because they cannot get it accomplished, but are frustrated of their intentions; for there may be carnal *will* to that *which is good*; when there is *no ability to perform*; as here, *to will is present, but how to perform what is good, I find not.*

XIV. Albeit believers do many times that which they do allow, and cannot but approve themselves in, if we speak of the substance of the act which they do; yet if we consider the circumstances of the action, as manner, measure, and end, it will always hold, that *the good which they would, they do not, and the evil which they would not, they do*, either for matter or manner, if not both.

XV. It is useful, and necessary to be often considering this combat which is in the regenerated, and how often it cometh to pass that the worst side prevaileth over the better in particular skirmishes, that our spirits may be kept humble, this heavy clogg being still in our view, and we may be driven nearer Christ, that we may get more grace to subdue, or at least to keep our own with corruption; and may long for the day when we shall be beyond its reach, and may be the more thankful for any little victory obtained, and take it as arles of a full and final victory coming: therefore doth the apostle repeat again the same that was said, verse 15. or not far from the same purpose, saying, *The good that I would, I do not, &c.*

XVI. As believers, when under this exercise and combat, and when foiled, are

are ready to question their state; Satan and a false heart being active to present this argument to some life; and to gild it over with fair colours that it may take the better; at least they are ready to be much discouraged at such a disaster; so the frequent consideration of this, that in that case God will not impute that to them, but will father the sinful act righter than they; and that it must be the daily practice of believers to be fighting, and that often it falleth out that they are put to the worse, may encourage them in that case: All this is clear in the apostle's repeating both the combat and the comfort upon the back of it, saying, *The good that I would, I do not, &c.* and, *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

VERSES 21. 22. 23. *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.*

For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

FROM what the apostle had said last, he draweth a corollary, and from thence bringeth in a third fit of distemper, holding forth a sad conflict and opposition betwixt his renewed and unrenewed part, the issue whereof is sad unto the poor believer. He was saying, verse 19. *That he did not the good which he would, and the evil which he would not, he did;* from this he infereth something from his own experience, viz. That whenever he had a design for the accomplishing of any good purpose, there was an enemy at hand, not far to seek indeed, but lying watching at the door, as it were; *I find then*, says he, *that when I would do good, evil is hard by, or present;* and it is so at hand as I cannot shun it: therefore he makes mention

of a law, *I find a law*, says he, to shew, that this evil corruption of his had such power over him as if it had been a law above his head, whose yoke he could not get-shaken off, and which he was forced to obey. Then cometh in the third and last distemper, holding forth a combat betwixt his renewed and his unrenewed part; where, first, verse 22. he seteth down the proper exercise of the renewed part, (which he stileth the *inner man*, because that tho' renovation reach the whole man, yet it mainly appeareth in the faculties of the soul, and so is hid from the eyes of men,) and that is, *to delight in the law, I delight in the law of God;* the moral law, the only rule of righteousness, says he, viz. in so far as I am regenerated, I take great pleasure both to know and to obey that law. And next he sets down the opposition which he meeteth with, verse 23. saying, *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind;* that is, I feel my unrenewed part (which he calleth a law, because of its forcibleness and power, and a law in his members, to shew, how contemptibly he speaks of it, in opposition to the inward renovation, which is hid in the heart, whereas it mainly works and prevails in the outer trenches, to speak so) making head against me, and openly waging war against the law of my mind, that is, against my renewed part, which hath a great propensity to be conformed unto the law of God. And lastly, there is the sad issue of this duel, *bringing me into captivity unto the law of sin which is in my members;* that unregenerate part which hath its own faction through my soul, and in my members, takes me prisoner under the command of sin, and unto the sinful inclination of my nature. This law in my members, which is diffused thro' all the faculties and parts of soul and body, and abuseth them to every sinful act, as its instruments, takes me captive unto corruption, which itself is sin, and the cause of all the wickedness done against

God's law; it tieth me with the fetters and cords of sinful affections, so as I cannot do what I would, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Believers have never cause to be secure, but always rather to be upon their guard, seeing even when they are best exercised, and in the best frame and disposition they can win to, they are, as it were, under the shot of their vigilant enemy, who is watching always at their doors, and closely attending their motions, ready to oppose when they are at their duty; for even when they are in this good frame, *that they would do good, evil is present.*

II. This opposition of corruption in the regenerated man is such as he will never be able to get shuned altogether; and so forcible and strong are the motions thereof, that they cannot be wholly resisted, but as a tyrant it domineers and acts as if it had a just title and right to dominion, as the acts and conclusions of tyrants go for laws; so here is mention made of a law, *I find a law, that when I would do good, &c.* as if corruption were in the renewed man by law and right, and acted all it did according to law, whereas mere force and tyranny is all its law.

III. Howbeit natural men may perceive a struggling in their carnal affections, upon some carnal principles, and for some carnal ends, against the doing of some moral good they would be at; yet so sly and subtle are the actings of corruption against grace and the motions thereof, that nothing but grace will be able to discover sufficiently the same: therefore says Paul, *I find a law, &c.*

IV. The way how a gracious soul will win to a discovery, and a right uptaking of the opposition of corruption and its motions, and to see its power and tyranny, is to be much in watching the heart about particular duties, and taking narrow inspection thereof in every thing he doth; for Paul finds this law, by considering how

he did that he would not, and was hindered in doing that which he would, and so infers it from what he said before, thus; *Now then I find a law, &c.*

V. The regenerate part of a believer, as it is excellent and desirable in itself, being a piece of God's image restored, which was lost at the beginning; so should it be of high esteem with us, and should be kept and watched about with great carefulness: and though grace, where it is, will kyth in the outward carriage of a man, yet it is mainly within at the heart, and we ought mainly to labour to have it there: Therefore is the renewed part of a believer called *the inner man*, as being most precious and so well kept; and because it is so, therefore we should not be rash to judge of mens estates, seeing it is so close, and hence called *the hidden man in the heart*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. Now that the renewed part is meant here by this *inner man*, is clear from other places, as Eph. iii. 16. *That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit in the inner man;* where the soul is meant, not simply, but as renewed by grace, and living the life of grace; for thus only it is capable to be *strengthened with might*; that is, to receive new supplies of grace and strength. As also from 2 Cor. iv. 16. --- *Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*: where the *inner man* signifieth the soul indeed, but as renewed, for so only it gains by afflictions, and gets new increases of life and strength, and further renovation each day. So that it cannot be taken here for the soul as distinct from the body; far less for the intellect, or the superior part of the soul, as distinct from the affections and inferior part.

VI. Albeit wicked hypocrites may have some flashes of joy, which only indure for a moment, and arise upon a carnal account at hearing of the word and tidings of the gospel, Matth. xiii. 20. yet it is only pro-

per to the renewed man, to look upon the law as the object of his delight and pleasure, and to take delight in these things which the law presseth, and join with the law; in assenting unto, approving of, and delighting in these things which the law enjoins; hence it is the subject of their meditation; Psalm i. 2: and is sweeter than honey; see Psalm cxix. 11. 14. 15. 16. 24. 47. 54. 97. 103. Job xxiii. 12. Therefore Paul saith here, *he delighteth in the law* (or with the law) *of God.*

VII. Grace will always be loth to rob God of his due, and ascribe that to any other thing which is his proper work, tho' proud graceless souls would be ready to *sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag.* Therefore Paul says, *he delights in the law of God; but how? after the inward man:* it is the regenerated part which God hath created which doth it.

VIII. Tho' grace and corruption be irreconcilable enemies, and grace be still labouring to eat away corruption; yet there will be corruption in the best to keep them in exercise; for tho' he was *delighting in the law of God; after the inward man,* yet even then *he found a law in his members:*

IX. This natural corruption in believers, though grace be heming it in; and beating up its quarters daily, yet it is strong, violent, and forcible, and bold as if it had law upon its side, in molesting the poor believer; therefore it is here said to be a law, *I find a law.*

X. The violence and force of this lawless tyrant, tho' it act forcibly thro' the whole man, so far as unrenewed, but especially in the external parts where its opposition is most felt and marked; in opposing what is good, should not move us the more to comply with it, but still we ought to have hateful, base, and low thoughts thereof; after the apostle's example here, who calleth it *a law in his members;* by way of indignation, as also

to shew, where mainly its counter-working kyths.

XI. As corruption is about to drive the poor believer, by its tyrannical force, unto sinful courses; so, upon the other hand, the renewed part has a forcible strong power in the man, inclining him, and moving him to what is agreeable to God's mind; for as there is *a law in his members,* so there is *a law in his mind.*

XII. Hence the believer in all his actions is betwixt contrary tides, intending to sail along with the one, and crossed and driven back with the other; having a lawful superior; whose power he acknowledgeth, and whose commands he would gladly obey; and having a proud usurping tyrant, that emits contrary orders, and by mere force and violence runs him down, and compels him to counter-act his lawful sovereign's command: *I find a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.*

XIII. Believers, even when trode under foot, by this tyrannical usurper, corruption, will have high thoughts of their lawful superior, the renewed part, and grace will be in high account with them, and have a great room in their affection; for whereas he called corruption, *a law in his members,* he calleth the renewed part, *a law in his mind,* as thinking it far more worthy than the other, as the soul is far beyond the outward members of the body.

XIV. In this daily battle the believer, notwithstanding of the many promises of victory, (which will indeed have their effect in due time) is many times, not always, put to the worse; not by reason of the weakness of the Spirit of God by which they are guided, but through the strength of corruption, and their slackness in watching against sin, and negligence in making use of the Spirit and his assistance; for this *law in his members is bringing him into captivity unto the law of sin, which is in his members.*

XV. Whatever way the believer be

tailed

ſlained by corruption, and how often ſoever he be laid on his back, yet it is ſtill with a conteſt, and a battle, and ſore againſt his mind; he always abides faithful to his juſt maſter, and never yields voluntarily unto corruption, nor ſides with it, even when overcome: for as there is a *waring* ere he be overcome, ſo when overcome he is ſtill a *captiue*, and a priſoner who longs for liberty and redemption; therefore ſays he, *It bringeth me into captivity.*

VERSES 24. 25. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!*

I, thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.---

IN this 24th verſe, and in the beginning of the 25th verſe, there is Paul's carriage under this ſad fit of diſtemper, and in this time of captivity and bondage, when he is ſore ſlained, and driven on his back with corruption prevailing for a time. In this carriage of his, there is, 1. a ſad and lamentable complaint of his caſe and condition, crying out, *O miſerable man!* as if he had ſaid, What a miſerable and pitiful caſe is this that I am into, never free of fighting, but wearied with continual ſtirs and combats: the word ſignifieth one who is daily preſſed with calamitous combats, and is overwhelmed, and almoſt drowned with theſe waves and ſtorms, ſo as he can hardly ſwatter out again. 2. A hideous outcry for one to deliver him out of ſuch a ſad and calamitous condition; *Who will deliver me from the body of this death, or this body of death!* (for it may be read both ways, and to the ſame purpoſe,) not as if he doubted in the leaſt meaſure, nor as if he deſpaired of relief, nor yet as if he were altogether ignorant where to get help and relief; but hereby is expreſſed the vehemence of his deſire, being almoſt overcome and out-wearied he gets a word up, not ſeeing help at hand,

and cries out, *Who will deliver me?* who will rug me out of this dungeon? (the word ſignifies a plucking out with force, as a lamb from a lion's mouth:) And from what? *from this body of death, or from the body of this death;* that is, from this body of corruption which would ruin and undo me, and bring me to death, for it is deadly, and will never let me alone ſo long as I am living. This natural corruption is ſo vile, a thing that names enough cannot be got to ſet it out, therefore ſometimes it is called *the old man*, Rom. vi. 6. Col. iii. 9. as the renewed part is called *the new man*, Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10. ſo is it called *the body of ſin*, Rom. vi. 6. 12. ſo *the outer man*, 2 Cor. iv. 16. as the regenerate part is called *the inner man*, Rom. vii. 22. 2 Cor. iv. 16. Eph. iii. 16. and *the hidden man*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. alſo it is called *ſleſh*, Rom. vii. 5. 18. 25. and viii. 1. 4. 6. Gal. v. 17. Col. ii. 11. 2 Cor. xii. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 6. So here it is called *the body of death*, pointing out both its univerſality, it reacheth the whole body, and has, as it were, members of its own; and alſo its deadly poiſonable nature, it can do nothing but kill. Then, 3. After the apoſtle, being plunged over head and ears, with ſome difficulty gets up a word; he gets his head up above the water, and gets his eye-lids open, and ſees an outgate *through Jeſus Chriſt*; he ſees that Chriſt has purchaſed and procur'd full redemption unto him, and ſo he was ſure of a full and final victory one day; and his heart was ſo glad at that he could not but expreſs his thankſfulneſs to God for ſuch a great mercy, and therefore cries out, *Thanks be to God*; and becauſe he knew that nothing we can do will be accepted but in and through Chriſt, therefore he addeth, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, for it may be read both ways: and becauſe this was not his caſe alone, but common to all the ſons and daughters of God, he makes the conſolation common to all too, ſaying, *our Lord.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Believers being made partakers of a new nature, and being quickened by grace, are, so to speak, more tender skinned than formerly, and do not ly like blocks unsensible of the slaits they meet with at the hands of their spiritual enemies, but do now resent, as sensible of their slavish condition, what affronts they meet with, and can cry out with the apostle, *O wretched man that I am!*

II. However believers may rejoice when they compare themselves with the wicked, who wallow in the mire as in their element, and consider the grace of God bestowed upon them; yet when they consider the power of corruption within them; and their own weakness, whereby they are daily put to the worse, they have cause to mourn and lament their condition, and this they will have cause to do so long as they are on this side of time, even to cry out with Paul, *Wretched man that I am.*

III. Believers are so far from taking any pleasure and delight in their captivity and bondage under corruption, (as the wicked do, who desire no better than to ly in the puddle of sin without any trouble or molestation,) that they are earnestly groaning, sighing, longing, and crying after a delivery: *Who shall deliver me?*

IV. Believers, though free of any fit of despair, or anxious dubitation about an outgate; yet they may be so surprized with an unexpected slait, and driven so blind with a sudden assault and wave of the sea of corruption coming over head and ears, that they may be put to cry out, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* they may be so damished with the stroke, as not to know where they are for a while; and not able to see at the first a helper at hand.

V. So strong an enemy is corruption, prevailing over the poor believer, that it is not in his own power to rid himself

from under its feet, but some body else must do it for him; and it is not in the power of the arm of flesh to do it, nothing can prevail here but the arm of Omnipotency; for he must be *rugged out* by some body else beside himself, and it will cost *a pull, a tug, or a strong draught* ere he be delivered: *Who shall deliver me, or rug me out; &c.* says he.

VI. Corruption seems no contemptible enemy unto believers, (whatever it do to others) when they get a right view thereof, but as a whole, unbroken enemy, standing still in a full body in the fields, to bid them battle, and give them exercise every day: therefore Paul calls it here *a body*, to shew what power it hath, and how universal it is, and how complete, as a body made up of so many members.

VII. All that corruption is driving at in its motions and atings, is to ruin and undo the poor believer; it is a cruel and merciless tyrant, that will rest satisfied with no less than the death and destruction of the poor captive; it is an enemy that grants no quarters, but sets on with fire and sword: therefore it is called *death*, to shew that where it prevaileth, it doth nothing but kill; and if it got withgate, and was not restrained by grace, it would as certainly kill and ruin the poor soul, as if it were death itself; and therefore believers are to have no truce therewith, nor cessation of arms, but to seek out with all possible diligence for some auxiliaries, to rid them out of bondage, as Paul doth here, who crieth seriously and heartily, *Who will deliver me from the body of this death?*

VIII. Howbeit believers may be so run down by the strength of corruption, as to be put to bewail their condition, and to conclude their case desperate as to any help they can make themselves; yet the Lord in his goodness, will, with this strong temptation, give an outgate, 1 Cor. x. 13. even Christ Jesus, on whom only help is laid, is at hand, and believers have him to fly to in all

all their straits and difficulties; and a sight of this by faith, will lift up the head of a believer sinking under discouragement, and be matter of consolation, even when captivated with corruption: all which is clear from this which followeth, *Thanks be to God, &c.*

IX. As in and thro' Christ, we got the pardon of our sin; so it is in and thro' him, who died, *that he might sanctify and cleanse his church, and present her glorious, without spot or wrinkle, holy, and without blemish*, Eph. v. 26. 27. Col. i. 22. that believers are kept up in the battle against corruption, so that they are not quite overthrown thereby, and that grace is always growing, and corruption decaying, and that at length they shall be fully delivered from any trouble and molestation it can create unto them: Therefore says he, *through Christ Jesus*; faith, as it were, thus answering sense's question, *Who shall deliver me?*

X. Believers, even when captivated by corruption, getting a look of their Redeemer thro' faith, having a sure ground of a promise, and Christ's purchase to go upon, may be assured of a final and full victory in the end, so as to rejoice in it before hand, and praise God upon the very hopes founded on faith, and cry out with the apostle, *Thanks be to God.*

XI. Whatever mercy we get from God, or have sure grounds of hope to get in due time, we should be so affected therewith, and have our hearts so raised thereby, considering the greatness of the mercy in itself, our unworthiness, and the absolute necessity we have thereof, that we should acknowledge the same with great thankfulness of heart, and cry out with the apostle here, *Thanks be to God.*

XII. As the whole work of our redemption is a plot of the whole Trinity, and all of it so contrived, as we cannot see which of them we are most obliged unto; so should our rent of praise be paid to all alike: *Thanks be to God*, says he.

XIII. As all the blessings we get from God come down in and thro' Christ; so must all our services and duties be performed in Christ, in whom alone they will be accepted, who is our eternal priest: Therefore says he, *Thanks be to God, through Christ*; Col. iii. 17. *And whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

XIV. All believers having alike interest in Christ as their King and Lord, whatever ground of hope any have in Christ, of getting any blessing from God, may be useful unto others, and may be a ground of comfort unto them when in the like strait: Therefore doth he add, *our Lord*, to shew that others in the same exercise with him, may make use of the same grounds of comfort which he made use of, having the same interest in Christ with himself.

VERSE 25. --- *So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

THIS is a conclusion of the whole matter, being a recapitulation, and a short sum of the battle, which he sets down, being now come to himself, after the great commotion that his stirring affections made, as grief upon the one hand, and joy upon the other hand, is ended; and in this sum he shortly points out in himself even regenerate, (for he says, *I myself*, and so gives clear proof that he is not speaking of nor personating any other, and that in the present time, to shew that he speaks of himself as regenerated) how all believers come short of that holiness which they strive to be at, and how this cometh to pass: and so pointeth out, 1. Two parties contrary each to other, *viz* his *mind*, (which is not to be taken for his intellect, but his renewed part, which sheweth itself chiefly in the mind) and his *flesh*, that is the unrenewed part, which is chiefly exercised and executed by the carnal body. 2. He point-

pointeth out two contrary masters, whose interests these parties labour to advance and promote; or two distinct and contrary ends, which they level at, *viz. the law of God, and the law of sin*; that is, the righteous law of God upon the one hand, commanding what God would have done, and forbidding what he would not have done; and natural corruption, powerfully swaying and compelling to what God forbideth, and restraining from what he commandeth. And 3. He pointeth out two contrary actions, or the contrary actings of the two contrary parties, the one serving and promoting the interest of God in obeying his law, the other serving and obeying the inclinations of corruption, and so promoting the interest of sin.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. To the right uptaking of one's condition, there is necessary a sedate, quiet mind, free from perturbations, and the contrary tides of affections tumbling each upon another; seeing these affections, now in our state of sin, cannot be kept within the due banks and limits: for Paul, after he is win out from this throng, sets down his condition clearly, saying, *So then, with my mind, I myself serve the law of God.*

II. It is most dangerous, and a course tending to foster pride and security, for believers to forget, or to live without the constant sense and apprehension of an irreconcilable adversary within them, opposing what is good and commanded, and thorturing them in every turn they go about: Therefore doth the apostle give another hint at this truth, that *he had flesh within him*, that made him *serve the law of sin*.

III. As believers have contrary parties

within them, driving on contrary designs, and so jostling with and counteracting each other; so it is very necessary that believers be well acquainted with this, that they may know how to father things aright, and so may neither conclude, that there is no corruption in them, when they consider the propensity they find in them to what is good, nor that they are altogether unregenerated, when they find some inclination to what is sinful: Therefore doth he over again mind them, that, *with the mind* believers *serve the law of God, and with the flesh the law of sin.*

IV. Let men who trust to carnal reasoning, and love not to be guided by the Spirit of truth; say never so much to the contrary; yet it is a truth beyond all question, that every believer is twosome, leveling at two distinct ends: for Paul would ting the bottom out of the controversy (seeing probably what opposition would made thereunto by men of corrupt it by not only repeating the truths, adding, *I myself*; as if he had said, *I am now regenerated, myself.*

V. The renewed part bei the image of God, labours formity unto God's will, and and more like him in holiness, holy, and the stronger this be in a man, the liker is he unto God and his law: for it is the work of the mind to be *-serving the law of God.*

VI. The unrenewed part being altogether sinful and corrupt, draws ay to its like, and goes as willingly and chearfully about any course that may promote the kingdom of Satan and sin, as if sin were its lawful superior, and its motions undoubtedly right and laudable laws: therefore *the flesh serves the law of sin.*

CHAPTER VIII.

FOR the further clearing of this great point of truth, which the apostle has been speaking to through the whole of this epistle, and for the further confirmation thereof, and that he may the more allure folks to fall in love therewith; he holdeth forth a notable ground of consolation, *viz.* That such as embrace this way pointed out by him, and will embrace Christ by faith, are in such a safe state, that, notwithstanding of any remainder of corruption in them, which may expose them to God's curse and wrath, they shall never be condemned. And this he cleareth and holdeth forth; 1. In general, to verse 9.; and then, 2. more particularly, applying it for the use of the Romans, to verse 12.: Then, 3. presseth, as an use therefrom, the study of mortification, by several arguments, to verse 18.: Then, 4. having hinted at a suffering life in the end of verse 17. he insists upon that subject, and presseth them to a christian, sober way of enduring afflictions in a world, and for that cause useth many strong arguments to the end.

VERSE 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

AFTER this sad conflict, which the apostle hath been shewing, he and all believers have, while they are here away, by reason of the remainders of corruption, he sets down a most comfortable truth, and thereby answereth a great scruple which

might trouble the godly, who were daily vexed with a body of death, and found themselves continually almost flayed by corruption within them; for they might say, Alas! what shall become of us, seeing we are thus put to the worse by corruption? Doth not every sin bring on God's curse and wrath, and make us liable unto damnation? How shall we then get this shuned? He answereth, That notwithstanding the remainders of corruption were strong in them, daily molesting them, as they did him who was an eminent man; yet they are free enough from condemnation, the condemnatory sentence of the law shall not pass against them who are in Christ, joined to him by faith, are impeded in him, and abide there; *There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ.* And this consolatory sentence he infereth by way of a conclusion, natively flowing from what he had said in the latter-end of the last chapter, *viz.* *That Christ would deliver him from the body of death;* he there got his eye on Christ; as one at hand to help him, and fully deliver him in due time, from the body of death within him; and from thence he infereth, That seeing corruption should not wholly overcome him, and all thro' Christ; so neither should corruption bring God's curse and the sentence of death upon him; Christ would free him from the one, as well as from the other. And tho' he might have infered this comfortable conclusion, particularly for his own use; yet he makes use of it more generally, for the more general comfort of all believers, and that upon good ground, seeing what

is essential to believers as such, agreeth to all believers. And, because many would be ready to grip to this consolation that had no right to it, therefore he giveth a sure mark of such as are in Christ, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*; that is, who, tho' they have corruption and flesh in them, and are oft led and drawn by it to sin; yet followeth not its guidance with a full consent of will, but with a battle and reluctance; they do not look on corruption as their lawful superior, but as a tyrant; the flesh reigns not, so that they do not live and order all their carriage, according to the inclination of sin and corruption, but follow the dictates of the Spirit.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is not unusual even for believers, to fear death and destruction, when they consider the power of sin within them, and how thereby they are oftentimes brought to the ground: for Paul's saying, *Now therefore there is no condemnation*, seemeth to imply, that they feared they should be condemned.

II. Howbeit that every sin in itself deserveth God's curse and wrath, and believers be oftentimes foiled with corruption, and put to the worse; yet, having now fled in to Christ by faith, and thereby being justified, they are freed from the curse of the law, and the condemnatory sentence thereof, and put into a state of salvation and absolute freedom from the penalty of the covenant of works, which before they did ly under: for *there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ*, they are now passed from death to life, and shall never see death, John v. 24. and viii. 51.

III. Believers ought to be so far from concluding themselves to be in a damnable estate, because they feel corruption stirring in them: that so much the rather, because they feel a battle in themselves, and something striving against corruption, and see.

and find help in and thro' Jesus Christ, so as they are not quite overthrown by the body of death, as the wicked are, but are enabled to stand out, they may rest assured that they are without the law's reach, and in a safe state; seeing Christ's helping them against the power of sin, is a sufficient proof that he hath freed them from the sentence of death, and the guilt of sin, for to whom Christ doth one, he doth both: therefore from what he said in the end of the last chapter, both *ancient* the combat and the way of delivery from the slavery of sin, verse 24. he now infereth, by way of a conclusion, *Therefore there is no condemnation*, &c. So that a believer in his midnight, acting faith on Christ, may have a clear noon-tide.

IV. Howbeit believers be not quite rid of the indwelling of corruption, yet that hindereth not the match betwixt Christ and them, but notwithstanding thereof there is a strait tye, and near conjunction betwixt Christ and them, so soon as they lay hold on him by faith, even so close a tye as they are said to be *in him*, 1 Cor. iii. 1. 2 Cor. i. 21. v. 17. and xii. 2. and *he in them*, Rom. viii. 10. Gal. ii. 20. Eph. iii. 17. they are in him as the branches in the root, John. xv. 1. 2. and joined to him as the body to the head, Col. i. 18. Eph. iv. 15. 16. and v. 23. 30. as the wife to her husband, Eph. v. 31. 32. and hence called *one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17.

V. Tho' Christ be offered to all in the gospel, yet all are not made partakers of this great privilege of union with Christ: there are many even within the bosom of the church who are strangers to this, who are not, nor never shall be, freed from the just sentence of condemnation; his appropriating freedom from condemnation unto such as *are in Christ*, says, all are not in Christ, and therefore partakers of this freedom from death.

VI. The only way of being made partakers of those rich and spiritual benefits purchased by Christ, is to be first u

to him by faith; no communion but that which followeth union, let ignorant, self-deceiving hypocrites imagine the contrary as they please; for *being in Christ* is the way of being made *free from condemnation*.

VII. Believers being joined together as members of the same body, Eph. v. 30. unto one head, and so partaking of the same influences necessary to salvation, having a right unto the same spiritual privileges, in and thro' Christ their head, may receive comfort from the self-same grounds from which the most eminent believers may and do comfort themselves: for from the forementioned grounds in Paul's own experience, he draws this general comfort for all believers, That *therefore there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ*.

VIII. It is too ordinary for such as are strangers to Christ, to be griping to those privileges unto which they have no right, and to be concluding themselves in a state of union with Christ, when they have no just ground therefore: hence it is that the apostle addeth these words, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*, to characterize such as *are in Christ*, that others may be put off who were ready to presume.

IX. Faith in Jesus Christ, or union with him, is so far from loosing folks from the study of holiness; that, albeit a holy life and conversation have no share of the glory due to the meritorious cause of our salvation, but that doth allenarly appertain to Jesus Christ, yet faith cannot be where holiness in some measure is not; and the study of holiness is a true and undoubted character of our union with Christ, according to the apostle's doctrine, who for a mark of these that *are in Christ*, giveth this, that *they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.

X. Believers being now united unto Jesus Christ, who is a sappy and a lively vine. are not fruitless, but bring forth fruit in due season, Psal. i. 3. and having now renounced the guidance of their carnal heart,

and of their corrupt fleshy nature, they have the Spirit of God for their leader and commander, and him only they acknowledge for their lawful chieftain and superior: therefore it is said, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.

XI. Tho' graceless souls, being deluded with a false heart, may persuade themselves, that they are acted by the Spirit, even when they are obeying the dictates of their own carnal heart, and following the swing of corruption, and doing the works of the flesh; yet these two chief commanders, are inconsistent and will not agree together, so that no man can serve two masters, and whoever are sold to the service of the one, are utter strangers to the guidance of the other: the adversative particle *but* sheweth their inconsistency, while he says, *they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.

XII. Albeit hypocrites, and many such as are strangers to Christ, and have never yet fled in to him for refuge and safety, may have a fair outside, and in their outward deportment, may seem most zealous and strict; yet being but painted tombs, full of corruption within, even in their best actions, they are guided no way by the Spirit of God, but by corrupt principles and sin within them: for only such as are *in Christ*, *walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh*.

XIII. Seeing believers may step aside, being drawn out of the way by corruption and temptation, and many wicked ones may have some fits now and then, looking like the temper of God's children; it is not safe for the one or the other to conclude their estate according as they find themselves in such fits, but by the constant track of their carriage, and their ordinary and daily walk: therefore says he, *they walk after the Spirit*.

XIV. It is both safe and warrantable for believers to gather their estate from external marks and evidences of holiness in their christian course, and to try it there-

by, sanctification being the best proof of justification and an interest in Christ; after Paul's example, who gives this as a character of their *being in Christ*, *that they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.

XV. It is a most dangerous thing for ministers, who are stewards of the mysteries of God, to hold forth comfort unto a people, hand over head, the wicked being most ready to suck poison from the sweetest herbs; and therefore they should so qualify such, unto whom they would hold forth comfort, as strangers may not take themselves to be interested therein: Therefore doth Paul qualify those who he said, were free of condemnation, by adding, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.

VERSE 2. *For the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

THAT comfortable truth which was set down in the foregoing verse, is further prosecuted by the apostle unto verse 9. And here, he confirmeth the same thus, There is in Christ Jesus the head of all believers, virtue and efficacy, both to satisfy justice, and so to loose believers from the sentence of condemnation and death which they were bound over unto by the law of works, for the breach thereof; and also to bear down and subdue the power of corruption in them, so that it shall not still bear dominion over them, and press them to sin as by a law; and therefore all such as are joined to this Head, as lively members, are freed from condemnation. There being two things which mainly affright believers, *viz.* 1. The guilt or the condemning power of sin, binding them over to God's curse and wrath; And 2. the domineering, enslaving power thereof, whereby it constrains them to sin, as a cruel potent tyrant. Now both these are so weakened to believers, as that there is a good ground of consolation founded

thereupon, as to their freedom from condemnation, and all in Christ, in whom there is *a law of the Spirit of life*, a new way of salvation, as a new law, laid down, *viz.* the covenant of grace, whereby the old law of the covenant of works is repelled, and a law of *life*, whereby only life is held forth, and *the Spirit of life*, the lively quickening Spirit of God is only to be had; which hath such influence, power, and virtue, by the ministry of the gospel, with it, as to renew and quicken more and more the soul in grace, and to kill, subdue, and bear corruption at under, so as it shall not reign as before; and so free the believer from *the law of sin*, or its power and dominion, (as if it were a law in force) as by the former he was freed from *the law of death*. In this he speaketh of himself in his own person; not as if this did not concern other believers; but as, in the last chapter, he brought forth himself as an instance, in the matter of infirmities, so here, in the matter of consolation, to teach every particular believer how to apply comfort to themselves.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. However such as are in the state of nature, do please their condition very well, as a state of freedom, they not knowing of a better, being *blinded by the god of this world*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and *dead in sins and trespasses*, Eph. ii. 1.; yet it is a state of bondage and vile servitude, and they bound over in the prison of Satan, as slaves to sin and corruption, which so domineereth, and tyrannically insulteth over, and constraineth them by force, as by a law: for believers are *freed* from a *law* of sin; and so sin kept them so at under, as if it had just laws on its side, and from this they were set free; the word properly significeth, *to free from bondage and slavery*.

II. Such a tyrant is corruption over these who are under its power, that it commandeth nothing but what is sinful, and forceth the poor soul to what is sinful continually.

and to nothing else but sin; all the acts and laws of this usurper are sinful every way, so that such as are in nature, and out of Christ, can do nothing but sin, being under a law of sin.

III. This dungeon of nature into which all are, who are out of Christ, is not only filthy, loathsome, and abominable, being a dungeon of sin, but also it is most dangerous, yea, deadly; so that let poor fools bewitched by Satan, promise what advantage they please to themselves in following the trade of sin, in end they shall meet with a great disappointment, even death, instead of life. Sin and death goeth in others hands, being knit together by one law, *the law of sin and death*; so that the law or state of sin is a state of death and condemnation.

IV. Man having now plunged himself into this miry dungeon, wherein, if there be no help had, he will sink to death, is unable to extricate himself, and help himself up; and Christ Jesus, and only he is able to deliver and rescue a poor captivated enslaved soul. So that let the condition of poor natural wretches be never so forlorn and desperate like, there is hope of help in Christ for them, if they come to him by faith; for there is a law of the Spirit of life in Christ, to free believers from the law of sin and death, and hath freed many, and Paul among the rest; *for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath made me free*, &c. says he.

V. Albeit believers be much vexed with corruption, so long as they are on this side of time, and because of sins which they commit daily, procure sad strokes upon themselves both outwardly and inwardly, so as they are not, nor shall not be free altogether of misery, till death be swallowed up; yet, being now united to Christ their head by faith, they are in a far better state than formerly, so as there is a real change in their estate before God, being now delivered from the sentence of death which they lay under, and not only so,

but they are also delivered from the tyranny of sin, so that it is not able to exert such full power as before; for *they are freed from the law of sin and death*.

VI. As none can satisfy the justice of God for themselves, but all must flee in to Christ, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, held forth clearly in the gospel; so neither will any get corruption subdued in any measure but by influence, fetched from Christ; and this power which is in Christ our head, is able to weaken the power of corruption within us, and to strengthen the new man daily: for only in Christ is there this *law of the Spirit of life*, which is able to set us free from the law of sin and death.

VII. However many a true believer may walk in darkness and have no light, as to their state before God, and still suspect themselves to be in black nature; yet a well-grounded knowledge of their estate may be attained by every true believer: for Paul says, *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath made me free*, &c.

VIII. Christ having purchased absolutely-necessary spiritual mercies alike to all his members, his bestowing these upon any one of them may be a sufficient proof that he will bestow the same for all: so that whatever difference there be among believers, even in respect of God's dispensations as to matters touching more their well-being than their simple being; yet as to absolution from the curse of the law, all have a like interest who are joined to Christ by faith; for the apostle proves, that all that are in Christ are free from condemnation, because so it is with him; saying, *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free*.

IX. As Christ is not such a sapless root, as can send no sap up unto the branches, nor such a dry head, as can send no influences unto his members; so the very consideration of this should abundantly confirm believers who are united to Christ by faith, that sin shall not be their ruin and

neck-break, but they shall be delivered from death: for he proves that *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, because there is a law of the Spirit of life in Christ, &c.*

X. As ministers should labour to be experimentally acquainted with those truths they deliver unto people, lest they prove cast-aways themselves, while they labour to save others; so it will be useful, not only for themselves, but also for others, in a sober, prudent way, to back their doctrine with their own experiences; as Paul doth here, in bringing in his own instance, saying, *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

VERSES 3-4. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh:*

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,---

WHAT he said last is here confirmed, viz. That believers are freed from the law of sin and death, in Christ, thus; Man being now fallen from his estate of integrity, and lost his original righteousness, and all ability to fulfil the law of righteousness; so that the law, which formerly could have helped folk to perfect conformity unto God's image, and to salvation thereby, meets with an impossibility to effectuate that now, not thro' any fault in itself, but by reason of man's corruption: God sent forth his own Son like us in all things, except sin, to die, and so to become a sacrifice for sin, and thereby condemned and abolished sin, by cancelling the bond by which we were bound over to punishment; and also to fulfil the law for us, so as his fulfilling of the law might be imputed to us, and we renewed by his Spirit daily, to be more and more conform unto the law: So that hereby we are both

freed from the condemning and commanding power of sin. Here then we are to consider the way whereby believers are freed from the law of sin and death, set down, 1. negatively; and 2. positively. 1. I say negatively; *the law could not do this*; it lay under an impossibility to effectuate this: And why? *Because it was weak*; and this he clearth, lest he should be thought injurious to the law, by shewing, that the law is not to be blamed for this weakness, for it is yet able to justify and save all such as will perfectly keep it; but all the fault lieth in man, who is nothing but corruption and flesh by nature; therefore he addeth, *thro' the flesh.* 2. Positively; where, (1.) we have the person described who works this deliverance, viz. the Son of God; *his own Son.* (2.) The prime and principal cause of this, *God sendeth his own Son*; the whole Trinity agree that the second person shall undergo the work. (3.) The way how he is sent, viz. *in the likeness of sinful flesh*: He assumed a true body, and so was like our sinful flesh in all things except sin, and so is more prone to sympathize with us, knowing now by experience what our infirmities are. (4.) The end of this incarnation of Christ, viz. *for sin*; that is, to this end, that he might become a sacrifice for sin, as the word is taken, 2 Cor. v. 21. and so might satisfy justice: or it may be taken for the impulsive cause; and so the meaning will be, He was sent because of sin. (5.) The fruit and effect of Christ's incarnation and suffering, or one main end of this great design, viz. the annulling the condemning power of sin, and cancelling its obligation, he *condemned sin in the flesh*, that is, in Christ's human nature; so that as man offended, man is satisfied. (6.) Another main end is, *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*, that is, that having suffered death which the law bound us over unto; and having performed that perfect righteousness which the law required; and all this being imputed to us, we might be accounted

ed to have done it, he being our head and husband; and also, that we might have the Spirit communicated, whereby we might be renewed, and so be daily sanctified more and more, till in end we be made perfect in holiness at death, and so this place is like that, Ephes. v. 26. *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Albeit the Lord had determined and decreed from all eternity, that neither Adam nor any of his posterity should attain life in and through the law, of works, yet in itself it was a way appointed of God, whereby man might have attained unto life, had the way carved out by the Lord been fully followed; for it is supposed, that the law, or this covenant of works, was once strong, when now it is said to be *weak*; the word, Gen. ii. 17. saith thus, that man being now in possession of life, should have continued by keeping the covenant.

II. This covenant being now broken and violated, can never again be repaired, being made with Adam in his state of integrity, and so a covenant of friendship, so that no man can now heal the matter after this breach is made; for now it is *weak*, and there is an impossibility for man to get life by it.

III. This impossibility of reaching the crown by this covenant of works, is not through any defect in that covenant, as if that way and dispensation had been imperfect in itself, and an unfit mean for such an end; but merely because man having now broken that covenant, hath rendered himself altogether unable to perform the conditions of that covenant; therefore it is said to be *weak through the flesh*: The fault lieth on man, who by reason of his corrupted nature is now utterly unable for the performance of the least part of the condition therein required; beside that, such is the nature of this covenant, that

being once broken, it can never be repaired again, as we shewed, Doctrinal Observation II.

IV. Man being now plunged into guilt, and misery therefore, is not only unable to rid himself out of the gulph, but also could never have invented a way of delivery; it was altogether beyond the reach of men or angels to have found out a way of recovery, but this device only bred in the breast of the only wise God; therefore it is said, *God sent his own Son*, and no word of our seeking of him, or asking for him.

V. The way of the redemption of lost man which infinite Wisdom has fallen upon, is a way altogether without a man's self, and only in Jesus Christ; in the contrivance and carrying on whereof man has no active hand, for *God has sent him forth*.

VI. Howbeit angels be sometimes called the *sons of God*, Job i. 6. and xxxviii. 7. in that they are spirits, holy and powerful, and thereby resemble God, and are daily near him, admitted to behold his blessed face continually; and faithful believers also have this title, John i. 12. yet that being by God's free grace, they are not after the same manner the sons of God that Jesus Christ is, for in an eminent way he is here *his own Son*, as being his proper Son by eternal generation; the Father having the divine essence of himself immediately, doth beget the Son by eternal generation.

VII. Christ being thus eternally begotten of the Father, so that he is his image and express character, Heb. i. 2. and being in a special manner called *the Son of God*, and *the only begotten Son of God*, John i. 18. and iii. 16. not because of his singular way of conception and incarnation, nor because of his extraordinary endowment with the Spirit, nor because of the Father's singular love to him, nor yet because of his resurrection, which only *declared him to be the Son of God*, Rom. i. 4. nor yet because
of

of his exaltation, he being the Son of God before he was conceived, or incarnate, or exalted, as here he is called *his own Son*, before he was *sent in the likeness of sinful flesh*; seeing it is so, I say, Christ must be truly and really God: so *God sent his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh*.

VIII. So that though God be one in regard of his essence, which is simple and indivisible, Exod. xx. 2. 3. Deut. xxxii. 39. and iv. 35. 39. Exod. xxxiii. 11. 1 Cor. viii. 4. yet in this most simple and indivisible Godhead, there are more persons, or individual substances, than one; and tho' these individual substances be not essentially distinguished, having but one indivisible essence, nor possibly can be separated one from the other, seeing they mutually subsist in one another, without any confusion or mixture, yet are they really distinguished, so as the one is not the other; for here there is *God sending*, and *his Son sent*, and so both are not one and the same person, but distinct.

IX. Albeit all the distinct persons of the Trinity have one and the same essential Godhead, yet are they not all incarnated when one is incarnate; and neither doth it agree to the Father, nor to the Holy Ghost to be incarnate, but only to the Son, seeing he is not incarnate as having the divine essence, but as having it in such a manner, viz. from the Father by generation; for it is *the Son who is sent in the likeness of sinful flesh*: See Luke i. 35. Rom. i. 4. Gal. iv. 4. Phil. ii. 7. Heb. ii. 6.

X. As all the external works of God in and for the creature, are common to all the Persons of the Trinity; so is this of appointing Christ to become Mediator to lost man, and to take on him our nature: The incarnation of Christ is the joint work of all the Three, albeit there be a certain order and subordination, as among the persons themselves, so in their acting; for *God* (which may be taken essentially for all the three persons, which are but one God,) *sent his Son*.

XI. Jesus Christ the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, who was equal with the Father in power and glory, Phil. ii. 6. took on him, in the fulness of time, man's nature, and so was made flesh; yet so as he was God still, and had not two persons, but one, assuming man's nature, which was void of any substance, into the same substance with his own person, Phil. ii. 7. Heb. ii. 16. and hence became the son of man, and so as there was no confusion betwixt his two natures, the one being still God, and the other man, each having their own proper operations and essential properties notwithstanding, nor change among them, every nature abiding the same it was, and so as both of them concur not as parts making up a third distinct person; for here he was *sent in the likeness of sinful flesh*.

XII. The body which Christ assumed, altho' it was not conceived as ours are, but in an extraordinary manner, yet was it no phantasm, but a real body; so that he became really man, having a true body, Heb. ii. 4: and a reasonable soul, Matth. xxvi. 38. for *he was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh*, and so it was *flesh* really.

XIII. The human nature which Christ assumed, though now it be glorified, yet while he was in the flesh, *in the form of a servant*, Phil. ii. 7. being *like us in all things, except sin*, Heb. iv. 15. it was clothed with such infirmities as are common to men; therefore it is said, *the likeness of sinful flesh*: hence is he called our *Brother*.

XIV. Though Christ had a body like ours in all essentials and sinless infirmities; yet was he free of sin; *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled*, Heb. iv. 15. For tho' his body was really *flesh*, Matth. xiv. 26. Luke xxiv. 39. yet he was only *sent in the likeness of sinful flesh*.

XV. The Lord having enacted a law, binding a man to obedience under the pain of death, there was a necessity flowing therefrom, that as man sined, so man should suffer

suffer for it, and therefore it became our Cautioner to be man like us; for God sent forth Christ his only Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, that he might condemn sin in the flesh.

XVI. Christ Jesus in his estate of humiliation, undertaking our debt, made a full and complete satisfaction to justice, so as God in justice could not but accept thereof, and acquit those for whom it was paid; therefore, *for sin he condemned sin in the flesh.* Christ in the flesh offered up such a sacrifice for sin, that procured the stopping of sin's mouth, that it had no more to say against such as are in Christ.

XVII. As the law behoved to be fulfilled ere we could attain to life, because of the justice of God requiring satisfaction, and we could not fulfil the same neither in whole nor in part; so Christ our Cautioner undertaking for us hath fulfilled the same for believers, so as the righteousness thereof is fulfilled in the name of believers, as if they had done it themselves; for this is another end of Christ's incarnation, *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.*

XVIII. Christ being sent and commissioned of the Father to accomplish this work of redemption, may ascertain all believers, that they are freed from the condemnatory power of sin, and sentence of the law, and shall also be delivered from the infecting, defiling power thereof; for this is given as a reason to prove that we are made free from the law of sin and death, in and through Christ, that *he is sent of the Father for that effect, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.*

XIX. In this work of redemption we are no more to look to one of the persons of the Trinity than to the rest, seeing it is a work of the whole, and all have a hand in it; and whatever each doth, calleth aloud for love and thankfulness from us: for tho' Christ undertook the work, yet he was sent by all, and, in a manner, a servant to all.

VERSES 4. 5. 6. 7. *Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

For to be carnally minded, is death; but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

AS when he set down the great ground of consolation, ver. 1. lest any should have laid claim to it, who had no right thereto, he limited it so, as he characterized those to whom it did belong, saying, they are such as *walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*; so now when he has sufficiently confirmed it, he over again characterizeth the persons, verse 4.; and in the following verses, he sheweth what grounds he hath thus to limit that comfortable proposition to such only as walk after the Spirit; and so proveth, that the ground of comfort, laid down, verse 1. belongeth only to such as walk after the Spirit, and not to such as walk after the flesh: and his argument may be thus formed; All those who mind the things of the flesh, or are carnally minded, are liable to death, and lying under the sentence thereof; and those that are spiritually minded, and mind the things of the Spirit, are at peace with God, and have life: This is set down, verse 6. But so it is, that such as walk after the flesh, or are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, or are carnally minded; and such as walk after the Spirit, or they that are after the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit, or are spiritually minded: This is set down, verse 5. Therefore such as walk after the flesh are not free from condemnation, but are liable to death; and only such as are walking after the Spirit are free therefrom, being in a state of life and peace. The first proposition, as to the first part thereof, he proveth, verse 7. thus:

thus: All those who are enemies to God are liable to death; this is clear, and needeth no proof; but all that are carnally minded are enemies to God, *the carnal mind is enmity itself*, says he, and that because *neither is it, nor can it be, subject to the law of God*: Therefore all that are carnally minded are liable to death, &c.

So then, there is here set down a description both of the godly and of the ungodly man; the godly man is one *that walketh after the Spirit*; that is, maketh progress in Christianity, and followeth the motions and commands of the Spirit, and looks upon the Spirit as their commander, teacher, pattern, and scope which they drive at. Again, verse 5. he is called one *who is after the Spirit*, or according to the Spirit; that is, walks according to the Spirit. Then they are said to be *spiritually minded*; that is, have their minds taken up with spiritual matters that are concerning his glory, and with those things that are the works of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. these they level at. Now such an one *has life begun, and peace with God*; he is reconciled to God, and put in a safe estate; and this is so sure that he says, *To be spiritually minded is life and peace*; it is as sure a sign of it, as if it were itself life and peace. So the wicked, upon the other hand, is described to be one *who walks after the flesh*; that is, who proposeth no other design, but to promote the interests of the flesh, and taketh no other course but what tendeth thereto, and so is *after*, or according to *the flesh*; being altogether carnal, they follow the flesh as their guide. Moreover they are said to be *carnally minded*, and to *mind the things of the flesh*; that is, all their study, thoughts, cares, and actions, flow from carnal principles, and are altogether in and about carnal matters, whether they be things good in themselves, as the knowledge of sciences, or arts, or moral virtues; or indifferent, as honour, riches, these they hunt for in a carnal manner; or things evil, as the

works of the flesh, these they pursue with earnestness and delight: this, he says, procureth *death*, and is a sure mark of one who is in a state of death; death is the very fruit and wages of their pains and studies. Moreover it is said of them, that *their carnal mind is enmity against God*; that is, it is maliciously set against God, and is such an enemy, as is irreconcilable, therefore is the abstract put for the concrete; yea, it is so proud and contumacious, it will not bow unto the law of God, yea, nor can bow, *it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*: It is an enemy against the very nature of God, and would have him out of the world if it could, and therefore it tramples upon all his laws, and can do any thing rather than obey him.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It being a most dangerous thing for people to sew pillows under their own arm-holes, and to satisfy themselves with groundless hopes, and to deceive themselves with an imaginary right unto the consolations of the Holy Ghost; therefore the dispensers of the mysteries of the gospel should carefully prevent this, and so hold forth the ample and sweet promises in the gospel, as none may be encouraged to fly to them but only such as they belong unto; therefore Paul cometh over the limitation again, and saith, *Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.

II. A Christian's life here-away is a life in continual motion; they are not to keep one posture, and stand at one post, but ought to promote and advance in the way of Christianity; as the wicked servants of Satan do grow worse and worse, they should grow better and better, and grow daily in conformity unto their pattern of holiness and Captain: this is held forth, in that their life is said to be *a walking after the Spirit*.

III. Christians are not to look for a rest here, but are still to be in a marching posture,

posture, looking for their rest above; as the wicked are like the troubled sea, still casting up mire and dirt; for their life here is *a walking*, and a walking is toward a rest.

IV. As believers and the wicked are far different in respect of their state and condition, so in respect of their daily walk: The Christian has a principle of grace within him, the spring and original of all his motions; he walks according to a divine rule, upon spiritual motives, and directs his course to a spiritual end: But the carnal man has nothing but rottenness at his heart, and acteth from corrupt principles, upon corrupt motives, and proposeth nothing but corrupt ends, smelling rankly of the flesh; for the one *walks after the flesh*, the other *after the Spirit*.

V. The carnal unrenewed man has a carnal disposition and nature, and is of the earth; but the renewed man is from above, and hath a spiritual, heavenly disposition and nature; the one is after the flesh, and the other after the Spirit.

VI. Carnal men have all their cogitations and intentions exercised about carnal matters; their thoughts are, how they may grow great in a world, have much honour and riches, and the like, and how they may get some good in that kind, Psalm iv. 6. but the regenerate man is of a more noble disposition, and is designing higher matters, communion with God here and hereafter for ever, the subduing of corruption, and the advancing in holiness, &c. matters of another nature are taking up his thoughts: the one *minds the things of the flesh*, and the other *the things of the Spirit*.

VII. As this diversity of the regenerate and unregenerate man's exercise, as to their daily cogitations, intentions, and purposes, floweth from the diversity of their natures and dispositions; so hereby may every one win to know what their nature is, and whether they be in black nature or regenerated, *viz.* by trying whether all

their projectings and consultations are for the advancement of their carnal interests, or for the promoting of what tends to God's glory; for *he that is after the flesh, doth mind the things of the flesh; but he that is after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit*.

VIII. Tho' carnal hearts think it their wisest course to be wholly given for this world, and think it the shortest cut to life and happiness, and that notwithstanding thereof they may be at peace with God in Christ; yet there is not a readier course to destruction, nor a surer mark of one who is under the curse and wrath of God; for *to be carnally minded is death*.

IX. Howbeit the godly man, whose heart and eye is on heaven and heavenly matters, may be oftentimes troubled with fears of death thro' temptation; yet such as have a new nature, evidenced by a spiritual mind, may be sure of life; for life is begun in them already, and so they may be sure that they are free from condemnation; for *to be spiritually minded is life*.

X. Whatever trouble a godly soul meets with from the world, and carnal enemies, who are still shooting their horns in their sides, or in their own consciences now and then; yet being now regenerated and born again, as they are in a safe estate, so being reconciled to God thro' Christ, they are at peace with God; the enmity is now removed, justice satisfied, God reconciled, and peace spoken: for *to be spiritually minded is peace*, as well as *life*.

From verse 7. OBSERVE,

I. Tho' man at first was in good terms with God, being in covenant with him, and created *after his image*, Gen. i. 27. in *knowledge*, Col. iii. 10. *righteousness* and *holiness*, Eph. iv. 24. yet now since the fall, not only is he fallen from that blessed and happy estate in which he was created, Eccles. vii. 29. but is filled with all malice and enmity against his Maker, and is now turned an open rebel, and professed adver-

sary; for *the carnal mind is enmity against God.*

II. This woful and sad change that is in man now, turned from a friend, yea, a great favourite, yea, a favourite in great trust and power, (for he had dominion over all the creatures, Gen. i. 28.) to an enemy, is not only in his carnal and sensual appetite, but this evil hath infected the whole soul, even the best part; mind and will, and all, are now turned rank enemies to God; the very *imaginings of his heart are evil, and only evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. his whole nature is corrupted; for here the very *mind*, (or will, or acts of both, the *wisdom, sense, affection, desire*, and so his *best thoughts, inclinations, affections, and motions*, the word in the original will import all these,) being *carnal, is enmity against God.*

III. This hatred and variance which is betwixt man now corrupted, and the holy Lord, as it is irreconcilable; so it is extreme in itself, greater cannot be: until man be renewed, this hatred and enmity shall never have an end: therefore it is called *enmity*, in the abstract.

IV. Howbeit carnal men, destitute of the grace of God, may imagine and dream that they are in a safe condition, and that they shall not die, but live, and that by reason of their ignorance of their natural sinful frame; and so, right sight of, and a thorough belief of this, that until we be renewed in the whole man, and born again, we are at deadly feud with God, and are open irreconcilable rebels to the great King, Creator of heaven and earth, may thoroughly persuade us of our hazard of death and damnation; for to prove that to be carnally minded is death, he proves it by this, that *the carnal mind is enmity against God.*

V. However carnal men may pretend fair in their actions, and have many specious pretences, yea, and say, that they are serving God, and driving on a design for him; or if they be opposing any good

course, they will say, it is not under the notion of being a course approved of God, but will find subtrefuges under which to hide their malice and enmity before men, yet in very deed the rise of all their actions is their enmity *against God.*

VI. Man now in his estate of sin, is not only a rebel against God inwardly, and a heart enemy, but is also openly avowing his rebellion, and acting rebellion with a high hand, refusing subjection unto the laws of his rightful Superior and Lord Creator; now *he is not subject to the law of God*, but a lawless borderer.

VII. Howbeit we think little of sinning against God, and of refusing obedience unto his just and holy laws, yet every act of iniquity in such as are in black nature, will be exposed by God, as a proof of rank hatred and enmity; and this lieth at the root of every sin, *The carnal mind is enmity against God*; and why? for *it is not subject to the law of God.*

VIII. Tho' carnal men may do much in externals of religion, and may have a well-polished, civil carriage and deportment, yea, and thereby outstrip and shame many truly godly; yet they being heart-enemies to God himself, do nothing in obedience to a command; in all they do they seek themselves, and all is for their own ends, and not out of conscience to a command, and so their necks have never bowed to God's yoke; and so do what they will, they are never *subject unto the law of God.*

IX. Altho' the unregenerate man hath free will to many good actions, belonging to a natural and civil life, having still some reliques of the law of nature in him, Rom. i. 19. 32. and ii. 13. 14. and to a carnal righteousness, Rom. ix. 31. and x. 2. Phil. 3. 6. 7. yet can he not do any of these in a right manner, Rom. xiv. 23. Heb. xi. 6.; and as for spiritual matters, his understanding being darkened, Eph. ii. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 14. so as he cannot take up these things which transcend his capacity, and his will corrupted, he can do nothing less nor more, and

and so cannot convert himself to God, John iii. 3. 5. and vi. 44. but in that act is wholly passive, being *dead*, Ephes. ii. 1. yet not a mere stick or a block, for God acts on him as endued with an understanding and a will; yea, he cannot so much as dispose and prepare himself thereunto, Eph. ii. 10. John iii. 3. Tit. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 5. 19. 20. Col. ii. 12. 13. for here it is said, *he cannot be subject unto the law of God.*

X. Man's impotence to do good, being voluntarily contracted, and the just fruit of his own sin, is so far from excusing him at God's hand, and keeping him from punishment, that so much the more it proves the man to be liable unto death; for *the carnal mind is death, because it cannot be subject to the law of God.*

VERSE 8. *So then they that are in the flesh, cannot please God.*

THIS may be looked upon as a consecratory following upon that which he said last, *viz.* That *the carnal mind cannot be subject to the law of God*; whence it followeth, that the carnal man *cannot please God*: And this also confirmeth that which he was proving before, *viz.* That freedom from condemnation belongeth not to these who walk after the flesh, thus: Those who cannot please God, cannot expect freedom from condemnation: But so it is that such as are in the flesh cannot please God; Therefore, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. So deplorably sinful is the condition of folks by nature, that it cannot be easily understood, nor in few words set forth; for the apostle useth several expressions here to set it forth; therefore he styles natural people, *such as walk after the flesh*, verses 1. 4. to shew, that their carriage is carnal; and such as *are after the flesh*, verse 5. to shew, that their principle is carnal and corrupt; so here he calleth them

such as *are in the flesh*, to shew, that they are wholly drowned in it.

II. Folks by nature are even plunged over head and ears in corruption; it wrapeth them about as a mantle, so as all that they do, until that they be renewed, smells thereof; and it is their dwelling-house and element, they have a kind of being in it, for they are said to be *in the flesh*.

III. Man being thus plunged into corruption, hath now incapacitated himself for doing any good, so that there is nothing he can do, whether in his natural, moral, or civil, or in his spiritual station that will be well-pleasing in God's eyes: *They that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

VERSES 9. 10. 11. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

NOW after he has cleared the proposition of the argument, he falleth upon the assumption; and so after the general truth was made good, which he set down, verse 1. *viz.* That *there was no condemnation to such as were in Christ, and walked not after the flesh*, he applieth it for the use of the believing Romans, saying or assuming, *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit*; that is, you are not lying in black nature, under the dominion of sin, wallowing in the flesh; but you are now in a spiritual condition, in a more spiritual element. But lest he should foster a groundless hope in any, he addeth a

mark whereby this might be discerned : he would not take upon him to judge absolutely of their estate, but only in the judgment of charity ; and therefore for trial, he addeth, *If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you ;* that is, if the holy Spirit of God be dwelling in you, renewing your hearts, and sanctifying you. And this he confirmeth by a reason, saying, *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his ;* that is, if any man have not this Spirit of sanctification, which is the Spirit of God, and of Christ, pretend what he will, he is none of Christ's members.

And to illustrate this the more, in verses 10. and 11. he obviateth an objection which, if not removed, might obstruct their consolation ; for they might say, You tell us, that we who are believers are in the Spirit, and the Spirit is in us, and even the Spirit of God and of Christ ; but how can that be, or what comfort can we reap thereby, seeing we have corruption in us, and a body of death oppressing us, so as thereby we are brought to suffer many afflictions, yea, our bodies are mortal, frail, and brittle, and at length must die, and moulder in dust, because of Adam's guilt, and our own actual transgressions ; *the body is dead*, might they say. To which he answereth two things ; *First*, It is true, *the body is dead, because of sin ; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness ;* that is, tho' sin and corruption be in you, and because of that and of original guilt, your bodies be now liable to affliction, and at length shall die ; yet your souls shall never see corruption, by reason of the righteousness of Christ imputed ; and there is life begun in you, even a spiritual life of holiness thro' inherent righteousness wrought by the Spirit ; and so your spiritual part is living, and shall live, thro' the imputed righteousness of Christ, and begun holiness ; for we see no cause why we may not take in both. This is the first answer. The next is, Tho' your bodies are now mortal,

subject to many miseries, and shall at length ly down in the dust, yet they shall rise up again, do not doubt ; if Christ dwell in you by his Spirit, God that raised up Christ your head, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that is within you ; the same omnipotent power that raised up Christ, shall even raise you also ; and that Spirit which you have, whereby you are joined to Christ your head, shall restore you to life ; as the head is up, so shall you be raised. So here, then, he 1. concedes that the body is mortal, frail, and subject to miseries here, and to death at length, and that because of sin, both original and actual. And, 2. though corruption be in them, yet it possesses not the whole man, for the Spirit is life ; there is the life of grace begun, and the soul shall live by virtue of Christ's righteousness imputed, and received by faith. And, 3. he sheweth, that even the bodies of his people shall rise up again. And here, (1.) he sheweth whose bodies it is who shall be thus raised to life, or quickened ; even such as *have the Spirit of him that raised up Christ* ; that is, such as have the Spirit of God in them : not that the rest shall not arise, but to shew, that they shall rise in another manner ; for the rest shall be raised up to judgment, but they shall be raised up to life, and quickened ; and the rest shall be raised to dishonour by the power of God, but they shall be raised to honour, by the Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in them ; and the resurrection of Christ, who is their head, shall be the ground of their rising ; therefore he addeth, *he that raised up Christ, &c.* to shew, (2.) in the second place, that by the same power that *Christ was raised, shall they be raised* : And this he says the more to comfort them ; for if he had said, that Christ raised himself, which is true likewise, they might have said, Every one of us is not such an one as he was, able to raise ourselves, and so that is but small comfort to us. And then, (3.) he shews the way how this

this ſhall be brought about, viz. by the Spirit that dwelleth in them.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Though the grounds of conſolation, whereby the ſpirits of God's people may be reſreſhed, be ſet down in general; yet this need not ſcar true believers, tho' they cannot read their name there; but they may lawfully apply theſe unto themſelves, as the apoſtle clearerth, by his applying of that general ground ſet down, verſe 1. ſaying. *But you are not in the fleſh, &c.*

II. It is not enough for miniſters to clear general truths unto people, and leave it ſo; but they ought particularly to apply the ſame, that every one may have his own ſhare, be it in a matter of comfort or of reproof; thus ſhould the word of the Lord be rightly divided, 2 Tim. ii. 15. and this is the token of a faithful ſteward, 1 Cor. iii. 2: for ſo doth Paul here, bring home the general doctrine unto a particular application, for their uſe.

III. Miniſters ſhould take heed that they reach not comfort hand over head unto a people; but ſhould cut the word of the Lord aright, as wiſe ſtewards giving every one their own due; and for this cauſe, leſt the wicked ſnatch at comfort, who have no right thereto, and the godly ſcar, who ought to draw near, and are oft backward to approach, they ſhould ſo clearly point forth by marks and characters, ſuch to whom the promiſes of conſolation belong, as neither the preſumptuous be encouraged, nor the humble deterred: as the apoſtle doth here, ſaying, *Ye are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit, if ſo be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.*

IV. It being a dangerous thing for any to lay hold on a gracious promiſe, who have no right thereto, and have foul ſtomachs; and hurtful to caſt away the conſolations of God, when they are held forth to us; therefore all ſhould labour to be clear anent their condition, and ſhould diligently ſearch and try their eſtate, that ſo

they may know whether ſuch or ſuch comforts belong to them: The apoſtle caſts in this word, *If ſo be that the Spirit of God dwell in you*, to put them to a narrow ſearch and trial of themſelves.

V. Tho' believers may have much corruption in them, that may breed them daily trouble and ſore exerciſe; yet ſeeing they have fled in to Chriſt, and in part are made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. being *renewed in the ſpirit of their minds*, Eph. iv. 23. The Lord eſtimates them according to their better part, and ſo accounts them *not to be in the fleſh*.

VI. The ſtate which people are advanced to thro' faith in Chriſt, is a far other ſtate, and infinitely more excellent than the eſtate in which they were by nature; that was a carnal ſtate, this is a ſpiritual ſtate; they were before *in the fleſh*, but now *in the Spirit*; grace makes a real and a wonderful change.

VII. There are but two ſtates, in which all are, either in the fleſh, or in the Spirit, there is not a third; tho' many at once may have both fleſh and Spirit, yet they cannot at once be both in the fleſh and in the Spirit; theſe two ſtates are ſo contrary; *You are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit.*

VIII. Tho' there be but one true and living God, Deut. vi. 4. Jer. x. 10.; yet are there three perſons in this Godhead; that is, three underſtanding divine ſubſtances, ſubſiſting by themſelves, really diſtinguiſhed from other by their incommunicable properties, poſſeſſing the whole divine eſſence. For 1. here, there is God made mention of, that is, the Father the firſt perſon, who is unqueſtionably God, and who is ſaid, verſe 11. to have *raiſed up Chriſt*, and to raiſe up our *mortal bodies*, a work which only God can do: And 2. *Chriſt*, who is clearly a perſon, becauſe he is ſaid to dwell in believers, he has a being in them, verſe 10. and ſo ſubſiſting, John viii. 58. being one that has *life in himſelf*, John iii. 26. and is *endued with*

an understanding, John xxi. 17. and a will, John v. 21.; and a person distinct from the Father, in that that is spoken of him which cannot be said of the Father, viz. That he died and rose again, and the Father is said to raise him; and also from the Spirit, in that the Spirit is sent from him, as from the Father, and is therefore called his Spirit, and a person which is God, in that the same Spirit, which is called the Spirit of God, is called the Spirit of Christ, and so is conjunct with the Father in sending the Spirit, which is an undoubted token of the Godhead: see John xvi. 7. And 3. there is the *Spirit* a person also, for he has subsistence, and is said to dwell and abide in believers, and to raise them up, which a person only can do; and a person distinct from the rest, in that he is sent by them, and so called their Spirit, and in that God is said to quicken the dead by him; and also a divine person, or a person that is God, and hath the whole divine essence, in that he raiseth and *quickeneth the dead*, and dwelleth in all believers. Yet though the persons of the Trinity be distinguished, as we shew, even really among themselves, viz. as one relation or manner of being is distinguished from another, they are not distinguished really from the essence, as one thing from another; but only modally, (as they say) that is, as the manner of a being is distinguished from the being itself: So that we must not conceive any essential difference betwixt them, least we wrong the unity of the essence; nor that they are parts of the Godhead, because the Godhead is a most simple infinite impartible being, nor that they are so distinguished, as that they either are, or can possibly be really separated; for as they are co-essential, so do they mutually subsist in one another, John xiv. 10.

IX. Howbeit these three persons be distinguished in their personal properties, or relative subsistences, and personal immanent actions, so as what is said of the one cannot be veried of the other; yet in

respect of these actions in and about the creature, they work all jointly: Therefore both the Father and the Spirit are said to *raise the dead*; *he that raised up Christ shall also quicken your bodies, by the Spirit*.

X. As there is an order of original in the divine nature, or in the manner of their subsistences, so that the Father is first, the Son second, and the Spirit the third person of the Trinity; so, answerably is there an order in their operations, the Father working of himself, the Son working from the Father, John v. 19. 30. and viii. 28. the Holy Ghost working from the Father and the Son, John xvi. 13. so here, the Spirit is said to be the *Spirit of God*, and of *Christ*, in *dwelling in the saints*, and the Lord is said to *quicken the dead by the Spirit*.

XI. Yet we ordinarily find some works principally ascribed to one, and others to another person, viz. these works in which their manner of existence doth most eminently appear; as here, *raising of Christ*, and *quickenings of the dead*, are mainly ascribed to the *Father*; *to die*, and *rise again*, to *Christ* the second person; *to dwell in the saints*, unto the third person, or the *Spirit*.

XII. The Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity, hath his subsistence by way of proceeding from the Father and the Son both, not as two distinct principles, but as one, having both the same individual essence; hence is he called, *the Spirit of God*, and said to *proceed* from him, John xv. 26. Matth. x. 20. so is he called, *the Spirit of Christ* here, and Gal. ix. 6. Phil. i. 19. 1 Pet. i. 11. See John xv. 14. 15. and xvi. 13. 14. 15.

XIII. This Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity, as he is every where present in respect of his essence, and in the most wicked wretch, in respect of his general providence, Acts xvii. 28.; so in a special manner doth he reside in believers, after he has come and wrought in them the habits of grace, and is helping them to

act, yea, rather, working all their works in them, Phil. ii. 13. guiding them in the ways of the Lord, by becoming a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation*, Eph. i. 17. 18. filling them with *wisdom and spiritual understanding*, Col. i. 9. acquainting them with the secrets of God, 1 Cor. ii. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. and giving them the *knowledge of his glory*, &c. 2 Cor. iv. 6. and so leading them *in all truth*, John xvi. 13. 1 John ii. 20. 27. supporting them in difficulties, Psal. li. 12. Rom. viii. 26. Phil. i. 19. by calling to their minds what may tend thereunto, John xiv. 16. 17. and stirring up their graces, Rom. v. 3. 4. 5. hence we are called *the temples of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. iii. 16. 17. and vi. 19. See Psal. li. 11. Gal. ix. 6. 2 Tim. i. 14. Eph. i. 13. 14. Rom. v. 5. John xiv. 16. 17. and xvi. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 12. *If the Spirit of God dwell in you.*

XIV. Among other works which this Spirit of God is working in believers, he is advancing the work of holiness, restraining them from iniquity, and *strengthening the things which remain*, Rev. iii. 2. *renewing their youth as the eagles*, Psal. ciii. 5. setting on work his own graces, Gal. v. 25. 26. Eph. iii. 16. 17. and thus he is *a fountain of water, springing up unto eternal life*, John iv. 14. and hereby may believers safely judge of their estate, whether they be in Christ or not: for he says, *Ye are in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you*; and hereby he would have them trying, whether they be in the Spirit or not.

XV. This privilege of having the Spirit, is not a privilege belonging to the apostles, or some few eminent Christians in the primitive times, tho' then he did communicate many extraordinary gifts; in which respect, we find them oft said to be *filled with the Holy Ghost*, Acts ii. 4. and iv. 8. 31. and in many more; but it is common to all believers in some measure, this being a promise of the new covenant, Isa. lix. 21. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. which belongeth to all, Luke xi. 13. and purchased by Christ,

Heb. ix. 15. with Acts ii. 33. for in him *all the promises are yea and amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. yea, Christ himself promises this to all, John xv. 26. and xiv. 16. 17. and xvi. 14. and all their necessities call for his effectual presence, seeing *without* him they *can do nothing*, John xv. 5. they need strength, light, life, comfort, and perseverance, all which worketh that one Spirit: for here, the weight of our regeneration is laid upon it, so that if any *have not this, he is none of Christ's*, he is not in the Spirit.

XVI. As the Spirit of the Lord is familiar and homely with believers, not going and coming now and then as a stranger; so is his presence constant and permanent, however believers under desertion, may miss him, and think him gone altogether, and as to much of his comfortable presence, because of their grieving him by their sins, he may really be departed: yet shall he never finally and totally be taken from them; the seed of God shall still remain, for so runeth the promise, Isa. lix. 21. John xiv. 16. hence they are said to be *sealed*, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13. and iv. 30. and to *partake of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4.; so here, he is said to *dwell in them*, verse 9. yea, to *inhabit*; or *indwell in them*, verse 11.

XVII. There is a strait union and tie between Christ and all and every true believer; an union, tho' not essential, as is the union of the three persons of the Godhead, nor personal, as Christ's divine and human nature is united. (for we keep still our own personalty, and he his) nor such as betwixt matter and form, nor betwixt the water and the cup, nor as two things mixed together, nor as a *genus* and a *species*, nor as an accident in a subject; yet is it a *real union*, and no imaginary thing; a *substantial union*, betwixt whole Christ, as God and man in one person, and the whole person of the believer, soul and body; a *close and intimate union*, so as Christ and believers make up one Christ mystical,

1 Cor. xii. 12. Gal. iii. 16. yea, such a mystical union is it, as that union of Christ with the Father is made an example and pattern of it, John xvii. 11. and such as a few similitudes cannot set forth, and therefore many are made use of for this effect; as marriage, Eph. v. 32. a vine and its branches, John xv. 1. 5. the head and the members, 1 Cor. xii. 12. and xi. 3. Eph. v. 23. Col. i. 19. and as the building and the foundation, 1 Pet. ii. 4. 5. hence Christ and they are said to be *one Spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 16. 17. So here, *Christ is said to exist in them*, as before they were said to be *in him*.

XVIII. The knot of this mystical union between Christ and believers, or the way how it is made, on his part, is by his Spirit infused, (as by faith on ours, Eph. iii. 17.) that as the head and the body are animated with one soul, so Christ and his members are united by one quickening Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 12. 1 John iv. 13. 2 Pet. i. 4. and as man and wife, being duly married, are *no more twain, but one flesh*, Gen. ii. 24. Eph. v. 31. 32. so Christ and they are one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. for here Christ is said to *dwell in them*; how? because *his spirit abides in them*.

XIX. Let one have never so many fair flourishes of a profession, and never so many rare gifts of the Spirit, and common manifestations; yet so long as they are void of this quickening, enlivening Spirit, planting the habits of grace in them, and actuating them, and so leading them according to the word, in the ways of righteousness, they have no saving interest in Christ; *for if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his*.

XX. As original sin in the elect did not hinder the union to be made up between Christ and them, when they received him into their hearts by faith: so neither will daily sins of infirmity break the union when made, though thereby we grieve the Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. that is, provoke him to withdraw his gracious and comforting pre-

sence, Isa. lviii. 17. Psal. xxxii. 3. 4. and tho' thereby we *quench the Spirit*, 1 Thes. v. 17.; for *tho' Christ be in them, the body may be dead because of sin*.

XXI. Notwithstanding of this near and spiritual union between Christ and believers, whereby their very bodies are united to him, for the whole man is married to Christ; yet their bodies are still mortal, and subject to miseries hereaway; for though *Christ be in them, the body is dead*.

XXII. As by reason of that old threatening in the covenant of works, *That day thou eatest, thou shalt die*, there is a necessity lying on us all once to die, Heb. ix. 27. Job xxx. 23. tho' now it become a porch to life unto the godly; so notwithstanding believers are at one with Christ, and married to him, their provocations will draw down sad strokes from God's hand, and many sharp fatherly chastisements, *the wages of sin being death*, Rom. vi. 23. Isa. xl. 1. 2. Psalm li. 1. &c. xxxii. 4. 5. xxxviii. 1. 2. 3. and lxxxix. 30. 31. 32. not that there is any thing of vindictive wrath, or of the curse, in these chastisements, Christ having fully satisfied justice; and though believers are ready to question their interest in Christ, and cry out, *If it be so, why am I thus?* yet notwithstanding of all these afflictions and corruptions, the union stands, Psalm lxxxix. 31. 32. 33. and li. 11. even death itself cannot untye the knot; *Christ is in them, and the body is dead because of sin*.

XXIII. Though the soul in its own nature, be an immortal substance, not capable of corruption, as the body is, yet it is liable to a spiritual death, to a state of hatred, and separation from *the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power*, Luke xvi. 23. 24. 2 Thes. i. 9. and even here, may be *dead in sins and trespasses*, Eph. ii. 1. This is supposed, in that he says, *the spirit is life*.

XXIV. Believers being united unto Christ, and made one with him, are now in a state of friendship with God, and their

their souls are in favour with him, and so are in a state of life, and they shall never see death; *the second death shall have no power over them*, Rev. xx. 6. and they being made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. are in part sanctified, and so are living the life of holiness; thus *the spirit is life, because of righteousness*, viz. inherent.

XXV. The only meritorious cause for which the souls of believers are thus put into an estate of life and salvation, is only the righteousness of Christ, *the spirit is life, because of righteousness*, viz. imputed.

XXVI. Man is a noble and excellent piece of work, consisting of a body, and of a soul that is immortal in its kind; for in him there is *a body*, and *a spirit*, Gen. ii. 7.

XXVII. Thoughts of the life of grace begun into the soul, and carried on by the Spirit of grace which is in them, and of the life of glory which will follow, should comfort believers against all their troubles here on earth, yea, and death itself; therefore he tells them, that tho' *the body be dead*, yet *the spirit is life*, and death itself shall not mar this life.

From Verse 11. OBSERVE,

I. So sweet and excellent are the promises, and so sad and dreadful a thing is it to imagine a right unto a promise, and rejoice in the hope of receiving it at length, and yet be disappointed; that whenever a promise is held forth, we should seriously and earnestly put ourselves to the trial, whether we have the condition unto which that promise is made: Therefore doth he again say, *If the Spirit dwell in you*, &c.

II. Christ Jesus standing in the room of sinners, making satisfaction to the Father for their transgressions, did undergo the miseries of this life, yea, death itself, seeing no less could satisfy, because of the threatening annexed to the command, Gen. ii. 17. and so the body which he assumed, was a true body, he being like us in

all things, except sin, Heb. iv. 15. and his death was a real death, and no imaginary thing: for here, he is said *to be raised again*.

III. Christ Jesus, after he had lien under the power of death for a time, it being impossible for him to abide in the state of corruption, Acts ii. 24. Psal. xvi. 10. did truly and really arise from the dead; his body, which was detained in the grave until the third day, Mark xvi. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 4. being really and naturally joined to his soul again: for he is said *to be raised*.

IV. Christ Jesus did fully and completely satisfy the justice of God for the sins of man, so that no more was required of him, as to the price he was to pay; and God was well pleased with the satisfaction which he made, and therefore brought him out of prison: for it is said here, that God *raised him up*: See Acts ii. 24. not, that he did not raise himself up also; John x. 18.

V. However our bodies must rot in the grave, and worms must feed upon them, Job xix. 16.; yet will there be a resurrection of the dead, and all, except those who shall be in life on the last day, who shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, 1 Cor. xv. 51. 52. shall arise out of the dust: See Matth. xxii. 32. Mark xii. 26. Luke xx. 38. Dan. xii. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 54. &c. John vi. 39. &c. Acts iv. 2. and xxiii. 6. and xxiv. 15.

VI. However this resurrection of the body seem incredible and impossible to flesh and blood; yet this should abundantly satisfy us, that it is the work of God only, and none else can do it but he, and it is he who speaketh to *those things which are not as though they were*, Rom. iv. 17.: for here it is said to be the work of the Lord, *to quicken the dead*; and hence it is clear, that Christ is God, in that he is said to raise the dead, John v. 28. and vi. 39. 40. 44. 54. and xi. 25. for no natural cause can bring back from the privation to the habit, from death to life: and tho' angels

are said to have some hand in this; yet it is instrumental, Matth. xxiv. 31. and that only as to those actions which go before the resurrection; for it is the immediate work of God to form the bodies out of the dust, and re-unite them to their souls.

VII. In this resurrection, only the body is quickened and raised up, the soul being immortal, and therefore returning to God after death, Eccl. xii. 7. so that the soul cannot die, when the body dieth, Mat. x. 28. but is either made partaker of glory, 2 Cor. v. 1. 6. 8. Phil. i. 23. with Acts iii. 21. and Eph. iv. 10. or cast into the pit, Jude verse 6. 7. 1 Pet. iii. 19. for only *the mortal bodies are quickened*. 1 Cor. xv. 53. --- *This mortal must put on immortality.*

VIII. At the resurrection we shall not receive aerial bodies, but the self-same numerical bodies, which now we have, and which shall rot in the grave; all the pickles of dust, how far so ever scattered, shall be gathered together again, that the same body may receive the reward, 2 Cor. v. 10. and so flesh and blood, in respect of nature, shall inherit the kingdom, (for such a body was Christ's) but not in respect of corruption, 1 Cor. xv. 50. and so it will not suffice, that the man then have the same soul or form, but he must also have the same body, or else it should not be the same man: therefore, says he, *he shall quicken your mortal bodies.*

IX. Tho' all the wicked must arise, no less than the godly; yet it is only the resurrection of the godly which is merited by Christ: and as he is the meritorious cause of the resurrection of the godly; so is his resurrection the exemplary cause; and hence is he called, *the first fruits of them that sleep*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. and *the first begotten of the dead*, Rev. i. 5. Col. i. 18.: therefore it is said here, *He that raised up Christ, shall also quicken their mortal bodies.*

X. As the resurrection of the wicked is not merited by Christ, so neither is it brought about the same way after which

the resurrection of the godly is effectuated: The wicked are raised by the power of God, who is Almighty, but the godly are raised by the virtue of the Spirit, which is in Christ their Head, and in them; that Spirit whereby they and Christ are united in one, keeps all their bones, and at that day will gather all together, that as their head is up, so they may rise also: therefore he addeth here, *by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

XI. The belief and serious thoughts of the resurrection of these same bodies which we now carry about with us, should comfort us against the present miseries which they endure, and the fear of death that king of terrors: for he is labouring to comfort them against death with this, *That even the self-same bodies shall arise again.*

XII. Though now our bodies be subject to diseases and death, and is dishonourable, full of imperfections and blemishes, and vile and carnal, carried away with earthly things; yet at the resurrection they shall be changed, and raised up *immortal*, 1 Cor. xv. 22. *honourable*, verse 43. *glorious*, Phil. iii. 21. and *spiritual*, 1 Cor. xv. 44. 45. 46. 48. 50.: for *our bodies*, though now they be *mortal*, shall then be *quickened*.

VERSES 12. 13. 14. *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

But as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

THE apostle having now cleared the right which these believing Romans had to that grand consolation, set down in the beginning of the chapter, *viz. That there is no condemnation to such*; presseth upon them an use therefrom, before he go further; and that is, that they should not live after the flesh, but mortify the deeds of the body, and so advance in holiness

lineſs and ſanctification: And this duty he preſſeth from ſeveral arguments; as, 1. *We are debtors, not to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh; we are bound by virtue of a ſtrong iye and obligation, not to be ſervants to the body of death, fleſh and corruption, but to the Spirit, for this is clearly to be underſtood.* And, 2. *If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die:* this is an argument taken from the diſadvantage, or loſs which they ſhall be at, if they follow ſuch a courſe to the end; there is a connection betwixt ſuch a courſe and death, as betwixt the means and the end; ſo that if they follow the motions and deſires of corruption, they will have a comfortleſs, ſad dwinning life here; and if they hold on, will utterly periſh eternally. 3. *But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live:* upon the other hand, if they, by virtue of the Spirit of God, be labouring daily to put the life out of corruption, and that body of death, they ſhall have a comfortable and reſreſhful life here, and in end ſhall live the life of glory for ever. 4. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons of God;* that is, If ye will mortify the deeds of the body, by following the inſtruction and guidance of the Spirit of God, ye ſhall thereby evidence, both to your own conſciences, and to others, that ye are the ſons of God. And hereby alſo he confirmeth the former argument, and ſheweth, why they ſhall live if they mortify the deeds of the body; becauſe, if they do ſo, they are children, and all his children ſhall live. And all this is confirmed by a ſweet compellation, *Brethren,* ſays he; whereby he would ſhew, that he was under the ſame obligation with them, and that he laid no more bonds on them than on himſelf.

From verſe 12. OBSERVE,

I. Assurance of an intereſt in Chriſt, and of a right to the excellent privileges which are the inheritance of believers here-away, and in particular, an aſſurance of freedom

from the curſe of God, and the ſentence of the law, is ſo far from looſing believers from a cloſe and holy walking, and opening a door to licentiousneſs and impiety; that, on the contrary, it is the moſt kindly ground on which diligence and increaſe in holineſs groweth, and a ſweet kindly principle from which it floweth: for from the former doctrine, touching their intereſt in Chriſt, and freedom from condemnation, he now infereth by a formal, rational conſequence, *Therefore we are debtors, &c.*

II. The greater room miniſters have in the aſſections of people, their exhortations to duty will be the more heartily welcomed: *Therefore,* ſays he, *brethren, we are debtors, &c.*

III. However there be great difference among the children of God, both in reſpect of gifts, 1 Cor. xii. 4. &c. and of graces, 1 John ii. 12. 13.; yet all have the ſame ſpiritual and real intereſt in God as their Father, Matth. vi. 9. Gal. i. 4. Eph. i. 2. Col. i. 2. 1 Theſ. iii. 11. 2 Theſ. ii. 16. and in Chriſt as their brother, Heb. ii. 11. and therefore ſhould ſo look upon, and carry themſelves towards one another, in all their deportment, and contribute their aſſiſtance, for the mutual furthering of one another in the ways of God, and that in a moſt loving and brotherly manner; as Paul doth here, though an apoſtle, and ſo one who might have uſed authority, and thereby have commanded, he exhorts them as brethren; *Therefore, brethren, &c.*

IV. Tho' there be ſome duties which peculiarly are laid upon ſtrong and eminent Chriſtians, Rom. xiv. 1. 2. 3. &c. and xv. 1. &c. and ſome preſſed upon ſuch as are weak, Rom. xiv. 3. 22.; yet the duty of growth in grace, and advancement of Chriſtianity, is that which all, be they as eminent as Paul the apoſtle, or be they far ſhort of him, are obliged unto: Therefore ſays he, *we are debtors, &c.* putting himſelf under the yoke with the reſt.

V. Tho' believers, while in black nature, not being as yet called home effectually, were servants of unrighteousness, Rom. vi. 19. working the works of the flesh, Gal. v. 19. and following their own corruption and depraved dispositions, and were as busy in the work of sin as hired servants, who are under an obligation, are at their work; yet now being fled in to Christ by faith, that natural tie is broke, and they are no more debtors to the body of sin and death within them, but are freed from that bondage; *we are not now debtors to the flesh, &c.*

VI. To be making a trade and a constant exercise of sin, and in all our deportment to be following the motions and inclinations of corruption within us, without any combat or reluctance, is a palpable evidence that we are under the power and dominion of sin and corruption: for *these that are debtors to the flesh, they live after the flesh.*

VII. The obligation which lieth upon believers to walk after the Spirit, should strongly enforce them to a holy walking, and to a constant progress in holiness; and the not serious pondering and considering of this, makes many sit up, many backslide, and many advance slowly, in their course of Christianity: Therefore the apostle makes use of this as an argument to duty, *ye are debtors*, to the Spirit, and not to the flesh.

From Verse 13th OBSERVE,

I. **EVEN** believers, who have a new nature and disposition, being renewed by the Spirit of grace, are backward to duty many a time, through the remnants of corruption within them, quickened and stired up by Satan, and have need to be spurred up to their duty by strong motives and inducements; for the apostle useth sharp incitements even to those who are in Christ, and delivered from the dominion of sin, verse 12. saying, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, &c.*

II. Seeing believers are thus slack in their diligence, it is not only lawful but laudable for ministers to be pressing holiness upon them, with all seriousness, and for that effect may lawfully use sharp threatenings to set them on work, and not be accounted legal preachers: and believers may lawfully set forward, upon the consideration of the threatenings and evils which, by their negligence, they will bring upon themselves: Paul tells them, *if they walk after the flesh, they shall die.*

III. Threatenings which hold forth death eternal, on such and such conditions, do no way say, either that believers shall apostatize finally, or perish; but a godly fear of falling away, through the sense of their own weakness, strength of corruption, force, cruelty and subtilty of Satan, may well consist with an assurance of life, and of perseverance in grace unto the end, founded upon the unchangeable nature of God, and his promise; for the apostle says even to such as were *in Christ*, and to whom *there was no condemnation*, verse 1. that *if they lived after the flesh, they should die.*

IV. Albeit the Lord hath certainly determined and concluded, that his own children shall certainly enjoy the purchased possession, Jer. xxxi. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 19. John vi. 37.--40. Matth. xxiv. 24. and hath firmly promised the same in the new covenant, Gen. xvii. 7. Deut. i. 6. Jer. xxxii. 38. 39. 40. and xxxi. 31. 32. 33.; yet in bringing about this happy end designed and promised, he dealeth not with them as stocks and stones, but as rational creatures; and for this cause he maketh use of threatenings to spur them up, and of allurements to draw them on to duty: and so to press these to duty who are in Christ, and have the promise never to come into condemnation, he makes use both of threatenings and allurements, saying, *If they live after the flesh, they shall die; but if they mortify the deeds of the body, &c.* So that the using of threatenings is a rational way, **ap-
proved**

proven of God, in the depth of his wiſdom, for bringing ſuch to life who are appointed thereto in God's unchangeable purpoſe.

V. Albeit the threatenings of eternal death in the word, which we find knit to ſuch and ſuch conditions, ſay not that believers ſhall, or may, finally and fully fall into that courſe, nor yet that they ſhall or may utterly periſh; yet they hold forth a firm connection between the evil, threatened as the end, and the condition for which, as the mean; ſo that it is an everlaſting truth, that whoſoever followeth ſuch or ſuch a courſe, and particularly liveth after the fleſh, they ſhall die; for *if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die*. See Rom. vi. 25.

VI. Yet as believers may, in many things, be ſwayed with corruption, and follow the ſwing thereof; ſo ſhall they hereby procure to themſelves a dead, heartleſs, and comfortleſs condition in a world, and ſo loſe the comfort of their ſpiritual condition; and thus, *If they walk after the fleſh, they ſhall die*; taking the threatening in this ſenſe.

VII. There is no perfection in holineſs on this ſide of time, but God hath thought fit, that though at once Chriſt has ſatiſfied for the guilt of ſin, and it be ſo far removed, as that believers ſhall never therefore be brought into condemnation, yet their advancement in holineſs ſhall proceed by degrees, Phil. iii. 12. 2 Cor. iv. 16. 2 Pet. iii. 18. and therefore there is ſtill an old man of ſin within them, and a body, that ſtill abides ſo long as they are in the body, Rom. vii. 24.; for here there is even in believers, *a body, whoſe deeds muſt be mortified*. See Gal. v. 17. 1 John i. 8.

VIII. This body and indwelling ſin, which ſtill abides in believers, is not idle and dead, but is living and working, labouring to bring forth deeds of the fleſh daily, rebelling againſt the law of the mind, Rom. vii. 23. and *luſting to envy*, James iv. 5. and *againſt the Spirit*, Gal. v. 17. tempting and conceiving ſin, James i.

14. and eaſily beſetring us, Heb. xii. 1. for we hear of the *deeds of the body*.

IX. Tho' this body will never be gotten utterly rooted out of the believer while he is here, ſo as it ſhould no more have any reſidence or abode, Phil. iii. 12.; yet it may be gotten ſo weakened in its habitual actings, as it ſhall not trouble the poor believer as formerly; it ſhall not have ſuch life, vigour, ſtrength, activity; and readineſs in perplexing and croſſing him in duties, and drawing him to ſin; for this body and its deeds may be gotten *mortified*, and believers are preſſed to this duty, *to mortify the deeds of the body*; hence it is ſaid to be *crucified*, Rom. vi. 6. and ſo its blood and ſpirits, as it were, are let out: See Gal. v. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 16.

X. Albeit this body of death will never be totally killed, and its life fully put out, ſo long as our life is in; yet it is the duty of believers to be deſiring its utter deſtruction, to be aiming at, and endeavouring ſo to kill it, as it may never ſtir more; to have an irreconcilable hatred thereat; and therefore to be daily fighting and contending againſt it, and looking upon it as his deadly enemy, and acting towards it accordingly, he ſhould be mortifying it, giving it freſh blows and wounds every day: *If you mortify the deeds of the body*. See Heb. iii. 5. 1 Cor. iv. 27. 2 Cor. iv. 16. and vii. 1. And all this notwithstanding that it was utterly crucified and ſlain upon the croſs with Chriſt, by way of merit and example, Rom. vi. 6. and initially in our regeneration, when we get a new diſpoſition, and a principle of life.

XI. It is not a duty within the reach of believers, which they will get accompliſhed of themſelves; it will not be their duties, vows, purpoſes, and reſolutions, that will put out the life of corruption, or weaken its force; but the only efficient cauſe of this work is the Spirit of God, who ſends down new influences of grace, Eph. iii. 16. 17. 8. and makes the habit of grace to grow and flouriſh, who weakens corruption,

tion, burning up the root of it, by a real efficiency discovereth to us the evils thereof, helpeth us in our addressees to God, verse 16. calleth to mind the cross of Christ, discovereth a fulness in him, and helpeth us to wait upon him, and expect daily supply from him; therefore it is added, *If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body.* See Gal. v. 24. 25. Ezek. xi. 19. and xxxvi. 26. Isa. lvii. 17. 18.

XII. Tho' this work of mortifying the deeds of the body, be mainly the work of the Spirit, who *works all our works in us*, Isa. xxvi. 12. as *faith*, 2 Thess. i. 11. Col. ii. 12. and *prayer*, Zech. xii. 10. yea, our very *willing*, Phil. ii. 23.; yet is it still our duty, and an act of obedience in us; we mortify, the Spirit acting his graces in us, and facilitating the work, oiling the wheels with his continual influences: *If ye mortify, through the Spirit, &c.*

XIII. Tho' unregenerate men, may, upon some carnal account, forsake the practice of some sin, and seem to get the victory now and then over some corruption, which hath broken forth to their great trouble, and threatens sad judgments to come upon them, and they cry out and strive against it, so as it may ly still for a while; yet let such use never so much diligence, earnestness, and watchfulness, they shall never be able to mortify one lust: it is only the believer, who hath this Spirit of God, by which this is gotten done, abiding in him; therefore he speaks to believers, and says, *If ye mortify.*

XIV. In mortifying the deeds of the body, there should be much sincerity used, and an universal aim against all and every one of its deeds, flowing from a real hatred against sin, and every sin; and it is an unprofitable and unsuccessful course, to set about the killing of one sin, keeping truce with another; our stroke of mortification should be against all sin without exception; therefore we are commanded to *mortify the deeds of the body* indefinitely, none excepted. See 2 Cor. vii. 1.

XV. As such as are making conscience in sincerity, of mortifying the deeds of the body, may expect life and salvation for ever hereafter; so may they, in God's ordinary course of dealing, look for a peaceable and comfortable life, even here away; sin which was as a thick cloud intercepting the beams of God's love, being removed; tho' God may dispense otherwise with some for his own holy ends, as with Heman, Psal. lxxxviii. *If ye thro' the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

XVI. Tho' there be no such connection between the mortification of sin and life eternal, as betwixt a cause and its effect, life being *the gift of God*, Rom. vi. 23.; yet is there a connection between them as betwixt the means and the end; mortification is the way to life, as the end: *If ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

XVII. Tho' God hath unalterably determined the end of his own to be life, for the glory of his great name; yet as he hath in the same decree determined both the means, and the end which they lead to, so will he have the means used, although we have a promise of the end made us; therefore, though he said before, verse 1. that *there was no condemnation to them that were in Christ*, and then afterwards asserted them to be in Christ; yet he says here, *If ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

From verse 14th OBSERVE,

I. Whom the Lord has chosen to himself from all eternity, those, in his own time, he not only bringeth into a state of favour and reconciliation with himself, but also into a state of adoption, whereby they are received into the number of his sons, John i. 12. having the Lord for their Father, 2 Cor. vi. 18. and have a right to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God; thus they are called *the sons of God*.

II. Tho' believers, being brought out of nature into grace, have received the principles

ciples and habits of grace, and so being enlivened are more able to walk in the way of obedience than before; yet so weak is grace in them, who see only but in part, and so strong and active is corruption, that they cannot walk in the ways of obedience without help; they are as blind men, and little children, needing one to guide them and lead them; *they are led by the Spirit.*

III. The guide which believers have received to lead them is the Holy Spirit of God, who, as he infuseth the habits of grace, doth bring the same forth to act, by daily renewed influences, and so illuminates their minds more and more, to know the will of God, and sweetly moveth and inclineth them to obedience: *they are led by the Spirit of God.*

IV. Albeit the Spirit of God, in his outletings of saving influences, whereby his people are guided and directed, be a most free agent, both as to the measure of them, and the renewed grant, as to particular occasions, so as many at several occasions may be left to fall, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. as we see in Noah, David, Solomon, &c. yet as to the keeping in of the life of grace, and as to the actuating it so, in their habitual tract of walking, as they shall certainly enjoy the crown, there is some necessity, and so assurance, that they shall be constantly led by the Spirit; for by this, that *they are led by the Spirit*, they might know that they were *the sons of God.*

V. Tho' believers cannot walk nor act but as they are guided by the Spirit of God; yet this doth not loose them from a moral obligation to obedience: Tho' we should not see a harmony and sweet concord between the physical influences of the Spirit upon the wills of believers, and the free actings of their wills in obedience, yet there is; for although he says here, that they are *led by the Spirit of God.* yet he presseth them before, to the *mortifying of the deeds of the body.*

- VI. Tho' wicked persons do partake of the influences of God, as to their natural actions, seeing in him they *live, move, and have their being*, Acts vii. 28. and are acted by him in respect of external gifts and endowments; yet it is peculiar to the children of God only, to be so acted and influenced with divine and saving influences: *For as many (and no more) as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

VII. Sanctification, and following the warm and kind motions of the Spirit of God, in the constant tract of our life and daily walk, is a sure mark of our adoption, and interest in God as our Father; *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

VIII. As sin and iniquity doth much darken and overcloud folks interest in God as their Father, that they cannot read and understand the same; so the privilege of adoption itself, yea, and the perceiving and clearly seeing of the same, should strongly move and induce us to follow holiness, and labour to mortify corruption, and the body of sin: for this is an argument pressing mortification of corruption, that whoever are *led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.*

IX. As it is the Spirit in and by whom we get sin and corruption mortified, as we cleared, verse 13. Doctrine XI.; so the best way to get this matter effectuated, is to be giving up ourselves wholly unto the guidance and direction of the Spirit, and to be welcoming, and not opposing, resisting, nor impeding the influences of the Spirit: for taking this verse as rendering a reason of what was affirmed last, these words, *led by the Spirit of God*, are exegetical of these, *mortify the deeds of the body.*

X. Adoption is an undoubted arles of everlasting salvation; for hereby he confirmeth, that they that mortify the deeds of the body shall live; because they who are *led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

VERSES 15. 16. *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

THE last argument which the apostle made mention of, verse 13. *viz.* That such as mortified the deeds of the body, through the Spirit, should live, he confirmed, verse 14. by an argument, which also, as we shewed, serves as a new reason to press this duty of mortification. And this confirmation, set down, verse 14. he maketh good in all its parts. We may take up the reason thus: All that are the children of God shall live; but such as are led by the Spirit, or by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, are the sons of God; for we may take the one as exegetical of the other, as was shewn. The proposition he confirmeth, verse 17. *If children, then heirs, &c.* the assumption he confirmeth in verses 15. and 16.

But he so speaks to the confirmation thereof, as applying it particularly to the believing Romans, and so as it might serve to clear their interest in God as their Father, and point forth undeniable grounds of their adoption; and for this cause he giveth several evidences of their sonship; evidences which undeniably prove the same. As, 1. *The Spirit of adoption which they have received;* that is, the Holy Spirit, which cleareth and confirmeth them of their adoption, and which uniteth souls to Christ, and so bestoweth upon us the right of adoption, applying Christ to us, and us to Christ, by faith. And this is amplified and further cleared, (1.) from the effects of this same Spirit upon the same persons, laying them in fetters, under the lash of the law and curse of God, by manifesting unto them their sin and misery; and hence, he is called the *Spirit of bondage*, which once they had received as a gift of grace; and from this followed fear of God's curse

and wrath, and fear lest they should be forever banished from God. (2.) Though once, would he say, you was laid into the stocks by the Spirit, and knew no way to escape, and was once at your wit's end, yet it is not so with you now, there is a happy change, and you shall no more be troubled with such sharp exercises, by the Holy Spirit, as formerly; *You have not received again, &c.* (3.) This Spirit of adoption is farther amplified from a sweet fruit and effect which he works, *viz.* a holy, bold approaching unto God as a Father, and a confident laying open our wants unto him, as our Father; *whereby we cry, Abba, Father:* Crying imports boldness and confidence, and *Abba, Father*, is to shew, that there is now no difference between Jew or Gentile, such as used the Syriac language or the Greek; *Abba* is a Syriac word, and *Pater* is a Greek word. 2. Next he says, verse 16. that this Spirit *beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God;* that is, this same Spirit witnesseth the same with our consciences right informed, *viz.* That we are the children of God.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As the elect of God, no less than others of the lost children of Adam, are by nature dead in sin, drowned over head and ears in the sea of sin and misery, kept in slavery and chains under Satan's command, Eph. ii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 26.; so it seemeth good in the Lord's eyes, to make even those who are his own chosen vessels, to meet with bonds of another kind, because of their sins, and to fasten them in fetters of iron, under the guilt of sin, and due stroke of justice: Even these who are children, and made partakers of adoption, did once *receive the Spirit of bondage.*

II. When the Lord is thus dealing with his own chosen, he so discovers unto them the spiritual meaning and power of the law, Rom. vii. 9. whereby they see themselves condemned, and armeth con-

science

ſcience againſt them, to pannel and accuſe them of their tranſgreſſing the law, and that ſo and ſo often, and ſo and ſo heinouſly; and that ſo convincingly, that they can have nothing to ſpeak againſt the accuſation given in, but are forced to acknowledge themſelves guilty, Acts ii. 37. Iſa. lix. 12. Pſalm .l. 21. and then beareth home the due ſentence of death, which in juſtice they cannot but expect, and ſo maketh them to tremble, Acts xvi. 29. and unable to ſtand, Ezek. xxii. 14. and filleth them with ſorrow and grief, Pſalm cii. 9. and troubleth them, that they ſcarce know what to do, ſeeing no help from one hand or another, but looking on themſelves as utterly gone, for any thing they can ſee; and this locketh them up into the ſtocks, out of which they cannot win until his own time; therefore this caſe of theirs is called a caſe of *bondage*.

III. Though Satan be a ſpirit of bondage, keeping his own in the baſeſt ſlavery that is, 2 Tim. ii. 26. keeping them under the command and dominion of ſin, and alſo accuſing them ſometimes for ſin, ſo as they deſpair of help, being bound with the bonds of death, and chains of darkneſs, as was Cain and Judas, and ſo hereby drives them to deſtruction; yet the ſtrong convictions of guilt and miſery, which the elect of God, unconverted, ly under, when their conſciences are awakened, and the law is ſtaring them in the face, and the wrath of God appearing as due by law, whereby they are driven in to Chriſt the only city of refuge, and who only can ſave, Acts iv. 12. flow from the Spirit of God, whoſe work it is to *convince of ſin*, John xvi. 9. and who dealeth with men and women as with rational creatures, convincing them of their need of a phyſician, that they may be driven in to Chriſt; for they are ſaid to have *received the Spirit of bondage*; and ſo it is the Holy Spirit, for it is ſaid to be *received*, and is the ſame with *the Spirit of adoption*, and differs only in working a different effect.

Numb. IV.

IV. Albeit the Lord, who is the *holy One of Iſrael*, and muſt not be limited, may, and doth ſometimes, bring home ſome of his own in their young and tender years, Luke i. 41. 44. 2 Tim. iii. 15. Matth. xix. 13. 14. with Mark x. 13. and Luke xviii. 15. &c. and others more ſweetly and gently, and others more calmly and quickly, ſo as they do not taſte much of the bitterneſs of this work of bondage; yet in the Lord's ordinary way of calling home his own, he firſt becometh a ſpirit of bondage, before that he become a ſpirit of adoption. The Lord thinks it fit, to the end that they may the more eaſily be weaned from corruption and ſin, brought to a high prizing and valuing of ineſtimable Jeſus, and to a willingness to accept of him upon any terms, that they may be more fitted for comfort, and engaged to watchfulneſs in time coming, patience under tribulation, boldneſs in time of oppoſition, to thankfulneſs, Pſalm cxvi. 3. 4. 6. 12. love, verſe 1. and a humble way of walking all their days; as alſo for the glory of his own juſtice, Lam. i. 10. Neh. ix. 33. truth, power, Heb. x. 31. Mal. iii. 2. mercy, Eph. ii. 4. 1 Pet. i. 3. 1 Tim. i. 13. Pſalm clxv. 9. and ciii. 8. and goodneſs, Rom. ii. 4. wiſdom and holineſs, Exod. xv. 11.; for theſe ends, I ſay, the only wiſe God thinks fit to make the cords of hell compaſs about his own, Pſalm xviii. 5. 6. and to bind them over in fetters of iron, and ſo put them in the ſtocks before he enlarge them; he will firſt become a ſpirit of bondage, locking them up in priſon, before he become a ſpirit of adoption: *Ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again*, ſays he, *but the ſpirit of adoption*; and ſo the one is ſaid to go before the other.

V. Albeit the Lord deal not with all who are come to age, in this manner, after one and the ſame meaſure, as we ſee, Matth. ix. 9. compared with Acts ii. 37. but ſome are kept longer in *the place of breaking forth of children*, as ſome who are more froward, Acts xvi. 24. altogether ig-

norant, Acts xvi. 14. enemies to Christianity, as Paul, Acts ix. who have led a most wicked life, have had many warnings, are *settled on lees*, Jer. xlviii. 11. and so cannot be gotten easily weaned from sin; and others are brought a shorter cut; yet the Lord acquainteth those of his own, whom he bringeth home at age, with so much of this work of bondage, as maketh sin a burden unto them, Matth. xi. 28. lothsome, and that which they dare not tamper with again; and maketh the poor sinner go out of himself altogether, and become humble in his own eyes, so as the saddest dispensations shall be welcomed; and also maketh the soul prize Christ, and close with him upon his own terms, over the belly of discouragements, without further excuses and delays, Matth. xviii. 19. And, in a word, he so far convinceth them of their sin and misery, as they see no remedy but Christ, and are content to submit to him with all their heart, and make peace with him upon his own terms: Therefore he says of all the believing Romans indefinitely, that they had received the spirit of bondage; *Ye have received the spirit of bondage.*

VL While the elect of God are under the grips of the spirit of bondage, though they be in some near capacity for, and not far from the kingdom of God; yet are they all that time in a state of nature, there being but two states, under two covenants; for as long as they are under *the spirit of bondage*, they have not *received the spirit of adoption.*

VII. Albeit unregenerate sinners may set about these means which God hath appointed for conviction of guilt and misery, such as prayer, Psalm cxix. 18. preaching, &c. yet, there being no necessary connection between these duties and this spirit of bondage; it is an act of the Spirit of grace, who bloweth where and when he listeth, to take his own and shut them up in prison, and so proceedeth from love, though they read nothing but anger and wrath in

such a sharp dispensation, while they are lying under it; hence they are said to *receive this spirit of bondage.* It is a gift, and a gift of free grace, flowing from the bowels of everlasting love.

VIII. When the soul is thus under the lashes of the spirit of bondage, it is lying under great fear of being cut off for ever by the hand of justice: it is *a spirit of bondage to fear.* See 2 Tim. i. 7. Heb. ii. 15.

IX. Howbeit the children of God, who are made partakers of the spirit of adoption, and brought in to Christ, may lie under great trouble of mind, and have many grips and pangs of an accusing and troubling conscience, Psalm xl. 2. yea, and possibly forer throws than ever they met with before, by reason of Satan's increasing the jealousy which their deceitful hearts hath against God, and otherwise working upon the heart, thro' God's permission; the Lord also, for wise and holy ends, withdrawing the influences of his Spirit, whereby they might be supported and comforted; yet the Spirit of God doth never become a spirit of bondage to them again, convincing them of being in a state of sin and enmity, and of being under the curse and condemning wrath of God, and as lying under God's vindictive justice as yet unsatisfied: *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again.*

X. After God has sufficiently humbled his own people, under the hand of the spirit of bondage, he bringeth them into a gracious state of adoption, and the work of the spirit of bondage ends always thus in the elect, Isa. lxi. 1. 2. 3. Psalm cxxvi. 5. 6.: *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again,---but ye have received the spirit of adoption.*

XI. This noble privilege of adoption which is peculiar only to the elect, Eph. i. 5. whereby, of God's free love, Eph. i. 3. 5. 1 John iii. 1. through Christ as purchaser, Gal. iv. 5. Eph. i. 11. 1 Pet. i. 3. 4. and deliver, as head of all the rest, being

being the Second Adam, and so is called the *first-born*, Psalm lxxxix. 26. 27. Heb. ii. 11. 13. see Rom viii. 28. 29. 30. we are made *sons and daughters to God*, 2 Cor. vi. 18. is brought about by the Spirit of God, for by him we are united to Christ, and so are said to be *born of him*, John iii. 6. &c. therefore he is called, *the spirit of adoption*; as also because he witnesseth our interest in Christ and adoption, as we shall hear in the next verse.

XII. Believers being now brought into a state of adoption, may have much boldness in their addresses to God, having liberty to go to God at any time, and in any place, and upon any occasion, Psalm ci. 2. x. 1. and cxxxix. 8. and lay forth all their mind and cares before him, 1 Pet. v. 7. begging every thing they want, John xv. 7. Psalm xxxviii. 9. and that without complementing, in downright language, though they could but *groan*, Psalm xxxviii. 9. or *chatter*, Isa. xxx. 14. yea, and use importunity, Gen. xxxii. 26. being confident of an answer, Heb. x. 22. upon the ground of a promise, Psalm cxix. 25. 28. 58. 65. 76. 116. 169. and God's justice, truth, and faithfulness, Psalm xxxi. 1. xxxv. 24. cxix. 40. and cxliii. 1. And so, tho' sometimes they be under deadness and indisposedness, thro' being in darkness, and not beholding the promises, which are the spirit and life of prayer, nor their interest in God as theirs, and through their negligence in acting their graces, and through neglect of prayer, and other escapes; yet some win to this holy boldness, and all may win to it, to cry boldly, *Abba, Father: We cry, Abba, Father.*

XIII. This holy and spiritual boldness in the saints their approachings to God, always ought to be accompanied with a holy fear, making the soul watchful lest he ask any thing which is not according to God's mind, or carry himself any ways unbecoming the great and glorious God, considering how great a Majesty he is, and how mean they are and unworthy;

and so they must still look upon God as their Father with a reverent fear; and tho' they cry, yet it is, *Abba, Father: We cry, Abba, Father.*

XIV. This freedom and liveliness in prayer, is a fruit and effect of that Holy Spirit whereby believers are united to Christ, setting them on work to the duty, upholding and loosing them from bonds which are upon their spirits, and so enlarging their hearts, Psalm li. 11. 12. removing sin, and every other thing which prove discouragements; and, withal, clearing the grounds whereupon they may hope to come speed; for, says he, *We have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* See Gal. iv. 6.

XV. Albeit graceless and unrenewed people may pray and seem to have much life in prayer, by reason of abundance of expressions, and such like; and may seem to express much zeal and boldness: yet this freedom and boldness in approaching to God is peculiar only to such as are his, and *have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we (says he) cry, Abba, Father.*

XVI. This spirit of adoption doth not work life and vigour, and boldness in holy addressing ourselves to God, in all alike, in the same manner and measure, so that even the same believer may have much more deadness, and far less boldness at one time than at another; but is a free agent, and works thus in whom and after what measure he seeth fit; therefore he is said to be *received: Ye received the Spirit,--- whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

XVII. This holy, humble boldness in coming to God as a Father, in our prayer, is a good evidence of our adoption, and union with Christ; for this is one of the effects which is wrought in such as are brought home to Christ by the spirit of adoption, it makes them cry, *Abba; whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

• XVIII. This privilege of having free and full access to God, by prayer and supplication, is not proper to some few be-

lievers only, but is common to all without any distinction, be they Jews or Gentiles, Greeks or Barbarians; if now they have received the spirit of adoption, they may cry to God in their own language, *Abba*, or *Father*.

XIX. A backlook unto our former condition, while under the fears occasioned by the Spirit's bearing home convictions of our guilt and danger upon our hearts, and fastening us into the stocks, so as we could no way escape, will serve much to illustrate and commend God's grace in bringing us out of prison, wherein we were in bondage, lying in fetters of iron; and put us into a state of freedom and sons, whereby we have access with boldness unto the throne of grace; therefore he says, *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

From Verse 16th OBSERVE,

I. As it is the Spirit of God which uniteth souls to Christ, by working faith in them; so it is the same Spirit which cleareth unto believers their interest in him; and among other of his works in the souls of believers, this is one, to assure and persuade souls of their union with, and interest in Christ, and so prove a *Comforter*, John xvi. 14. and an *earnest* or *seal*, Eph. i. 13. 2 Cor. i. 22. *The Spirit beareth witness.*

II. Altho' many that are true believers in Christ have not such assurance of God's love towards them, and of their interest in Christ, as others have, so that some may be labouring diligently in the use of the means for assurance; and yet (there being no scripture excluding such as want assurance from the kingdom of heaven, nor requiring these reflex acts of faith, as of the same necessity with the direct acts, relying and resting on Christ,) seeing this testimony of the Spirit may be received as a part of our reward, and so God is free to let it

out when and on whom he thinks good; an elect child of God may die without this particular act of assurance; yet many do win to this, 1 John ii. 3. and iii. 14. 19. 24. it being Christ's work to bring it about, John xvi. 10. 11. 12. Isa. lxi. 1. 2. 3. and that in the depth of the Lord's wisdom, that he may hereby wean them from the world, Luke ii. 29. Psalm lxxiii. 25. 26. 27. 28. encourage them in their approaches, support them under persecution and afflictions; yea, and all being justified and in part sanctified, have just title unto this grace of adoption, and win to so much persuasion of God's love, as encourageth them to flee in to Christ, and rely upon him; and if they want assurance it is their own fault, through yielding to temptation and corruption; whence it cometh to pass, that as many miss it long, so some who have had it miss it again, and cannot keep it, nor improve it, Psalm li. 11. 12. The Lord holds this forth in many promises, and here he says, *The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.*

III. This assurance which some of God's children do sometimes meet with, is not a conjectural knowledge, grounded on probabilities, and a fallible hope, but certain and infallible, *sure and steadfast*, Heb. vi. 19. and so a *full assurance*, Heb. vi. 11. at other times it may be short of this, and an assurance mixed with some doubting, and yet certain, founded on the promises of God, Heb. vi. 17. 18. It is an assurance founded upon a sure witness of the Spirit of truth, who cannot lie; *The Spirit beareth witness, &c.*

IV. Tho' sometimes when the soul is under great temptations, and under much darkness, and as it were between losing and winning, the Spirit of the Lord will, by a secret irradiation, and clear illumination, break in upon the soul, and banish all doubts and mists, so as the soul shall see clearly its interest in Christ, but yet according to the word; and sometimes bear in a promise

nile so forcibly upon the soul, as doth persuade it of an interest; yet the Lord's most ordinary way of clearing up the interest of believers, is, by clearing up the promises, general and particular, and bringing them home to the soul, and the soul to them, and also clearing their case unto their consciences to be such indeed as that promise speaketh to; that is, discovereth their graces, and that so clearly and visibly unto the soul, that there is no further caviling or questioning of the matter; but the soul is made to conclude that the promise is theirs, and that their state is good, according to the promise: Thus, *the Spirit witnesseth with our spirits, that we are the children of God.*

V. It is no easy matter for such as are indeed the children of God to know that they are so; so subtle a sophister is Satan, and well experienced in the art of brangling the grounds of people's evidences, and so false and deceitful is the heart, and ready to assent to Satan's suggestions, and so to mislead and cast at all the graces of God's Spirit in their own souls, as counterfeits; yea, no less will hush these doubts, and put an end to these comfortless disputes, than the Spirit of God: *The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits.*

VI. Tho' hypocrites may vainly deceive themselves, and imagine they have an interest in Christ, when there is no such matter; yet it is only true believers who win to this assurance and well-grounded persuasion: therefore, says he, *The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.*

VII. This testimony of the Spirit with the spirits and rightly informed consciences of his people, is a sure and undoubted evidence of our sonship and adoption, seeing he is a true witness, John xv. 16. John v. 6. Heb. vi. 17. 18. and unbiassed: See Eph. i. 13. 14. 2 Cor. i. 21. 22.: *The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.*

VERSE 17. *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

IN the first part of this verse, the apostle sets down the assumption of the argument set down in the last words of the 13th verse, whereby he was pressing them to mortification; and addeth somewhat for confirmation, whereby he pointeth forth the transcendent excellency of this life which they shall get. And 1. he points forth the just right and title they have to it, which floweth from their adoption and sonship, *If children, then heirs.* 2. He points forth the riches of this inheritance, or the nature of it, it is no less than God himself; so that it must be a happy and a heavenly, complete, and every way satisfactory inheritance, a blessed heirship; *heirs of God.* And 3. he points forth the certainty of it, it is an inheritance surely kept, that shall not be plundered, and whereof the rights shall never be brangled; Christ and we are in one and the same charter, and, to speak so, co-partners, *co-heirs with Christ.*

In the latter part of the verse, he points forth the ordinary way of winning to the possession of this excellent inheritance, so as we might not grow secure and lazy; and so forewarneth God's children of the worst, lest when they meet with sad dispensations and persecution, they should question their sonship and their right to the crown which is coming; and withal he speaks of this, so as he might encourage them to a christian, 'submissive carriage under the cross. by adding motives and speaking in arguments, *If we suffer with him;* that is, if we be content to follow the same steps, which our Master and Forerunner trode, and suffer for him and righteousness sake, then shall we win to the possession: for this is the ordinary way, 2 Tim. iii. 12. and the argument which he addeth, is,

is, *that we may also be glorified together*; our suffering here shall not mar our possession of glory; yea, so much the more we may rest assured, that if we suffer with him, we shall be glorified with him; as also there may be an argument in these words, *with him*; the Captain of our salvation has trode that same path, and therefore we may be content to be like our Master, and to meet with the same measure which he had, which may be sufficient for servants.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Believers having received the spirit of adoption, and being made partakers of that privilege, have an undoubted right and title unto glory, *jure hereditario*, they may lay claim to the same, all of them being not only sons, but first-born sons, Heb. xii. 23. and it is the privilege of the first-born to inherit, and thus are they *conform to the image of his Son*, verse 29. therefore says he, *If children, then heirs*; this hereditary right followeth upon, and floweth from their adoption: See Gal. iii. 29. Eph. iii. 6. Tit. iii. 7.

II. This heritage which believers have unquestionable right unto, is incomparably excellent, and inexpressibly glorious, they are heirs unto no mean one, *heirs of God*, and God and all that is in him is their heritage and portion; a most massy, rich, and comprehensive portion; *salvation*, Heb. i. 14. *all the promises*, Heb. vi. 17. *a kingdom*, James ii. 5. and *the grace of life*, 1 Pet. iii. 7. yea, grace and glory, and every good thing; yea, God himself the fountain of all goodness, he is their *portion*, Psal. xvi. 5. and lxxiii. 26. and cxix. 57. and cxliii. 5. Jer. x. 16. and li. 19. Lam. iii. 24. and they shall be blessed in full enjoying of him, 1 John iii. 2. 1 Thes. iv. 17.: *They are heirs of God*.

III. As this inheritance of believers is transcendently excellent, spiritual and glorious; so it is sure, permanent, and unchangeable, *a crown laid up*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. and *incorruptible* in itself, 1 Pet. i. 4. and

an inheritance which they shall certainly possess, and in due time enjoy: Christ the head and they the members are comprehended in one and the same charter and infestment; they shall be with him, John xvii. 24. and sit on his throne, Rev. iii. 21. and so shall not only partake of his glory, but also be sure of it, seeing he cannot be put out of possession; *they are joint heirs with Christ*.

IV. There being a necessity that all the heirs of the crown must pass thro' tribulation and affliction, by reason of God's wise appointment, and the malice of Satan and his adherents, who cannot be content to see the heirs of the crown living in peace, Acts xiv. 22. 2 Tim. iii. 12. 1 Thes. iii. 4. all that look for and do expect the promised inheritance, must resolve to pass thro' tribulation and adversity, and to *suffer not as evil-doers*, 1 Pet. iv. 15. but for well-doing, 1 Pet. iv. 17. and for righteousness, verse 14. and for being the children of God, Heb. xi. 25. and so for Christ's sake, Phil. i. 29. Acts ix. 16. and that rejoicingly, Acts v. 41. and christianly, 1 Pet. iv. 16. seeing thus the way is carved out, and hereby faith is tried, 1 Pet. i. 7. James i. 3. patience, experience, and hope helped, Rom. v. 3. 4. their affections loosed off the earth, their desires of heaven inflamed, and their prayers sharpened: therefore it is added, *If we suffer with him*. See 1 Tim. iv. 10. 2 Tim. i. 12.

V. As Jesus Christ, taking on our nature, that he might suffer for us, and satisfy for our debt, lay under some necessity to endure tribulation and persecution, Acts iii. 18. and xxvi. 23. Luke xxiv. 46. and being *the captain of our salvation*, was made *perfect through suffering*, Heb. ii. 10. and being our brother, Heb. ii. 11. cast a copy to us, to follow him patiently thro' all tribulations whatsoever, Heb. xii. 2. 1 Pet. iii. 18.; so it may be a great encouragement to us, to go thro' the saddest dispensations we can meet with cheerfully, knowing that Christ has sanctified that road

to us, by his going the same way, and that he is our master, and so his lot may satisfy us, Matth. x. 24. 25.; knowing also that he has left the lightest end of the tree to us to carry; if we suffer, we but suffer with him: *If we suffer with him.*

VI. Tho' the wicked, who are strangers to God, and to the saving knowledge of his name and ways, do think outward afflictions in a world, a token of God's hatred; yea, the godly themselves are ready to question God's love upon that account; and to think they shall never enjoy the promised inheritance, because they have such a life of afflictions; yet afflictions and tribulations need not darken believers sight of heaven; yea, they may the rather conclude, that they shall certainly enjoy the crown, if they endure to the end, Rev. iii. 21. Matth. x. 22. and that if they suffer with him, they shall *also be glorified together*; and therefore they ought to suffer with more patience and good-will, and quietly and heartily submit unto tribulation and persecution.

VERSE 18. *For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

THE apostle having made mention of crosses and tribulation, as the ordinary way to the actual possession of the crown of glory, he insists on it, and because he knew it was hard to get them brought to a willing submission under it, and to a cheerful way of undergoing the same: therefore, beside the strong motive and inducements he mentioned in the last verse, he goeth on in prosecution of the same purpose, and heapeth up many strong arguments to persuade them to suffer affliction cheerfully and willingly, unto the end of the chapter.

In this 18th verse is the third argument, which may be conceived thus; There is a great and exceeding weight of glory. 2 Cor.

iv. 17. which though now it be hardly known, but hid from the most part, yet it shall be revealed, in us, toward, or upon us, and it is so great and exceedingly excellent, that tho' the sufferings of this world should last long, (which yet are but *for a short moment*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. and therefore called, *the sufferings of this present time*) yet are they nothing in comparison of that glory which is to be manifested, tho' now *hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3. they are not worthy to be compared, or laid in the balance with (or if compared, yet they are far short of) that glory which sufferers for Christ shall partake of; Therefore afflictions should not be feared at, nor shuned. And this the apostle concludes, after mature deliberation, and pondering reasons on both hands; and so laying his accounts, he now *reckoneth, that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is good for ministers to be duly pondering and exactly weighing and considering every truth which they bring forth unto people, that so they may be the more confident and persuaded of the truth of them when they deliver them; and they ought so to hold them forth as truths whereof they are persuaded: therefore says Paul, *I reckon*, or (as the word imports) after reasoning and debating to and fro, and casting up all accounts, I find this to be truth.

II. Tho' God hath thought fit that his children shall have an afflicted and suffering life of it in a world; yet in the depths of his wisdom and goodness, he hath so contrived the matter, as that their sufferings shall not be of any long endurance; so that if they be in heaviness, necessity so requiring, for the trial of their faith, 1 Pet. i. 6. 7. it is but *for a season*, ibid. or for *ten days*, Rev. ii. 10. or *a moment*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. or *a night*, Psalm xxx. 5.

so here they are called, *sufferings of this present time.*

III. It is the little looking unto the other side of the sea, and considering of the shortness of the duration of our present afflictions, and how soon the blast will go over us, that makes us so ready to faint under, and unwilling to take on handsomely the yoke of affliction which God carves out for us, and so ready to take sinful courses to put it off; therefore to encourage them, he calleth their sufferings, *sufferings of this present time.*

IV. Such as get a right look of the rich reward which is kept in sure custody for believers, will not think their afflictions long, tho' they were of the faintest sort, and of the longest continuance; and a right view of that heavenly inheritance of the sons of God, will much lighten their afflictions; for Paul, a man as much acquainted with afflictions as any, concludes, that *the sufferings of this life, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.*

V. Tho' believers have many sweet and excellent days of communion with God, even in this world; yet their best days are in reversion; the eye hath not seen, nor the eye heard, what God has laid up for them, Isa. lxiv. 4. Psal. xxxi. 19. 1 Cor. ii 9.; as it is hid from their eyes, so it is sure, and kept in sure custody, being laid up for them, 1 John iii. 2. Their glory is a *glory which is to be revealed.*

VI. Tho' this excellent state of glory, which believers shall one day be put into, be now hid, for the most part, from their eyes, and the eyes of the world, and that so much the more, because of the sad and heavy afflictions under which they groan many a day; yet the day is coming when it shall break forth from under the cloud; and how despicable soever believers seem now, yet their glory shall be made manifest one day, and that day is certainly coming: *The glory, says he, which shall be revealed in us.*

VII. Would we live more by faith than we do, and take up the inheritance, which is to be had in possession one day, aright; and consider, how transcendently it goeth beyond the sufferings in this earth; so that they being but for a moment, and light too, cannot be laid in the balance with that glory which is eternal, and whose *weight is exceeding great*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. we would not be so timorous of suffering as we are, nor so afraid of the yoke: this is his argument, whereby he presseth them to a willingness to receive the yoke of affliction, *For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with that glory which is to be revealed.*

VIII. It is the height of delusion and madness for any to dream or imagine that there can be any worth, dignity, or merit in their sufferings, how sad soever they be, as if thereby they could purchase a right to the crown; seeing the apostle says, *that the sufferings of this time, are not worthy of* (and thus the words may be read) *the glory which is to be revealed.*

VERSES 19. 20. 21. 22. *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope:

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now.

FOR the further illustration and confirmation of the last argument, the apostle sheweth, 1. How that this glory is excellent, and shall certainly be revealed; and, 2. that therefore we should wait for it with patience, and in the hope thereof endure tribulation and affliction cheerfully: and this he doth unto ver. 26. and so here-
by

by would farther encourage believers unto patience and willing ſubmiſſion under croſſes and ſufferings.

In theſe verſes he brings in the creature, that is, the fabric of the world, heaven and earth, and the reſt of the inſenſible and irrational creatures, and makes uſe of them in a figurative manner, and ſpeaketh of them in borrowed expreſſions, that hereby he might incite believers the more, both to expect certainly that glory which is to be revealed, and to wait for it patiently under croſſes; all which he applyeth particularly, verſes 23. 24. and 25. So then, 1. he ſays, *The whole fabric of the world waiteth for the day in which the children of God ſhall ſhine in heavenly glory, and their heavenly eſtate ſhall be made maniſeſt; and this is ſet down moſt emphatically, The earneſt expectation, ſays he, of the creature waiteth, &c.* that is, the creature is, as it were liſting up its head, and ſtretching out its neck, or ſetting out its eyes with earneſt obſervation, and getteth up to ſome high place, to ſee if it can eſpy that day dawning, or that long wiſhed for ſalvation coming; and this it doth continually, and hereby ſheweth, that this glory is ſo much worth as may raviſh any body's deſire, when the ſenſeleſs creatures are ſo deſirous of that day. 2. He ſets down the grounds of this in two particulars; (1.) *The firſt is their preſent condition now ſince the fall of Adam; The creature, ſays he, was made ſubject to vanity; that is, they are not now as at the firſt, but obnoxious to corruption, and ſubject to changes and alteration, as alſo to the abuſes of ſinful men, who make them ſerve to the ſatiſfying of their own ſinful luſts: But how? Not willingly, that is, according to its natural inclination, or that uſe for which it was at firſt created; but by reaſon of him who ſubjected the ſame; that is, by reaſon of his will and command who created them at the firſt, that hereby he might declare how much diſpleaſed he was with the ſin of man.* (2.) The other ground is, that

they were thus ſubjected *in hope, becauſe the creature itſelf ſhall alſo be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God; that is, as for man's ſin, theſe innocent creatures were puniſhed and made liable to corruption; ſo when the glory of the ſons of God ſhall appear, that the ſame may be the more famous and remarkable, all the creatures ſhall be put into a new condition, not as if they were, or could be partakers of the glory which the ſons of God ſhall have, but they ſhall be renewed in their own kind, Acts iii. 21. 2 Pet. iii. 10. and brought into an happy eſtate of incorruption, when the ſons of God ſhall be made maniſeſt.* 3. All which he confirmeth and clear-eth, by ſhewing what is, and what hath been their deportment ſince the fall, and will be until the day of the manifeſtation of the ſons of God; and that in two expreſſions, (1.) *We know that the whole creation groaneth, as preſſed with a weighty burden, deſirous of eaſe; and (2.) Travail-eth in pain, having great and vehement grief, and withal a hope of outgate.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Though, at the begining, all things which God created were good for God's glory, and for man's good, yea, and very good in themſelves, and for uſes for which they were created, Gen. i. 4. 10. 12. 18. 21. 25. 31.; yet now ſince the fall, their condition is altered, and made worſe than it was: for they are now *ſubject to vanity, and under the bondage of corruption*, under which *they groan, and travail in pain*; ſo that now they are tied to ſerve the neceſſity of wicked folks, and muſt of neceſſity meet with uncouth alterations and changes for the worſe, and at length corrupt.

II. This ſad and lamentable alteration which is upon the face of the univerſe at this day, did not flow from its natural inclination and diſpoſition, (ſeeing before the fall man was in that capacity, that he might not have died, and therefore the creatures

being created for his use, as is probable, would have continued in the same state of perfection in which they were created) so much as from man's fall: This horrible confusion and disorder which is in the world, is the fruit and native effect of sin, and hereby man is the more punished; seeing they were created for man's use, and God would discover how heinous a thing sin is, so as we cannot be reasonably ignorant of the greatness and heinousness of sin, if we open our eyes, and look either to the heaven above us, or to the earth beneath us; *The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same*; that is, by the sovereign appointment and determination of God, who so ordered the matter, that sin might seem more odious, and man might be more punished, and bear the marks of his folly all his days, or by reason of Adam, who by his sin and rebellion did procure the same; for so the words may be also understood.

III. This heavy bondage of corruption, under which the creation groaneth, being a part of the curse inflicted for man's sake, Gen. iii. 18. Isa. xxiv. 4. 5. 6. Jer. xxiii. 10. is not to lie on continually; the elect themselves being at length to be delivered from all the parts of the curse and malediction of God, they will at length be delivered therefrom: for it is *subjected in hope, that it shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption*.

IV. This day of *restitution of all things*, as it is called, Acts iii. 21. wherein the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption and vanity, is not until the last day, when the children of God shall shine forth in glory and excellency; it is reserved unto that day, that the open acknowledgment or coronation of the sons of God, may be the more solemn; therefore they *are waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God*, and then when the marriage is solemnized, all the servants of the family shall, according to their several ca-

pacities, be glorious, or partakers of the *glorious liberty of the sons of God*, the more to illustrate the glory of the bride, and sons of God.

V. This liberty which the creation shall at that day enjoy, shall not be by its annihilation, or being reduced to nothing, as if all that glorious liberty of the sons of God to which it shall be redeemed, were nothing else but a ceasing to be used by sinners as now it is; seeing we hear of a new heaven and a new earth, 2 Pet. iii. 13. and that these shall only be changed, Psal. cii. 27. Heb. i. 10. see Isa. lxv. 17. and lxvi. 22. and however the heaven and the earth that shall then be, shall not have the same use which this hath; yet, tho' we cannot particularly tell the uses thereof, (as we are to seek often-times in finding out the use of many things which we see with our eyes) it will not follow that they shall not be; for man after the resurrection shall be complete in all his members; and yet we cannot tell what use many of these will have at that time; and may they not be a monument of God's power and greatness, and of the full and final abolition of sin, when all its effects are removed, even off the earth, which suffered therefore? Nor is this change which shall be of these creatures, a substantial change, so that the heaven and earth that now is shall substantially be destroyed, and out of its ashes another be created; Because 1. Then the same creatures which are subjected to vanity and bondage, should not be delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and so needed not earnestly look for the manifestations of the sons of God, if there were a substantial change; which is contrary to the apostle's doctrine. Nor 2. could it then be true that this creation, viz. which now is, was subjected in hope. Nor 3. that it shall share in its own kind of the liberty of the sons of God, for they shall not be changed substantially, the body being still the same substantially. But this change is only in respect of qualities, the

the substance abiding the same, after the fire, as it did after the flood: yet such a change will it be, as it may be well called another; as indeed it is, 2 Pet. iii. 13. Isa. lxv. 17. and lxvi. 22. and hence they are said to abide for ever, Psal. cxlviii. 6. because they shall be the same substantially, and yet to perish, 2 Pet. iii. 11. Heb. i. 11. Psal. cii. 26. Isa. li. 6. because they shall cease to be the same which they are now, being made partakers of a greater accidental perfection, in respect of spiritualness, purity, incorruptibleness, and glory; and so they are said to be *changed*, Heb. i. 1. 2. and *the fashion of them passeth away*, 1 Cor. vii. 31.

VI. By this creature which is said to be delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, we do not mean hell, or the place of the damned, which is no way to be bettered, but shall be the same then with what the reprobate, who are dead, are in now: nor under it can we comprehend the glorious place of the blessed, called heaven, nor the angels in it, because it being an excellent piece of work, in making whereof he gave a rare proof of his art and skill; it is not, nor ever was subject to vanity, nor is it now groaning under any bondage, and so needs no change: nor do we understand by it the children of God, as if these spoken of, verse 23. were apostles, and none else, seeing it is not peculiar to the apostles only to have the first fruits of the Spirit. 2. The creation here mentioned is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, verse 19. and to be delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, verse 21. But under it we comprehend this fabric of the universe, excluding these parts formerly mentioned, the starry heavens, and the rest of the elements: for it is only that creature which was made subject to vanity, that is to serve sinful man, which *shall be delivered*, &c.

VII. Albeit believers be often-times little regarded by men in a world, and the glory which they shall one day partake of be

little believed or valued, and tho' oftentimes they are ill-hampered in a world, and their head holden down with corruption and temptation; yet the day is coming, when the riches of their glorious and excellent inheritance shall be manifested, and they shall have glorious liberty; for we hear of the *manifestation of the sons of God*, and of the *glorious liberty of the children of God*, verse 19. 21.

VIII. As this day of the glorious manifestation and liberty of the sons of God, shall certainly dawn; so it shall be such an excellent and transcendently glorious day, that the very senseless creatures in their own kind, by a natural inclination, are greedily gaping after, and earnestly expecting, and vehemently desiring to see that day: which should shame believers themselves, who come short of this earnestness, seriousness, and frequency, in looking for this glorious day: They are not so solicitous nor anxious in expecting, or vehemently desiring the dawning of that day; tho' the benefit which is to redound to them be infinitely more than what the creatures can expect: *the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*.

IX. Tho' man be most insensible of the heavy weight of the curse inflicted for sin; yet so heavy and unsupportable is it, that the very dead creatures, who lie under little of it in comparison of what man lieth under, do groan and travail in pain, and that incessantly without intermission, *the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now*; in their own kind they are more sensible of it and grieved with it, than the wicked are who are endued with reason, and may more easily perceive the same; yea, so sad and heavy is it, that all the creatures who are made subject to vanity, do all of them jointly sigh and groan under it, and cry out for pain, as with one voice: therefore it is said, *the whole creation groaneth together, and travaileth in pain together*.

VERSE 13. *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

AFTER the apostle has thus shown the deportment of the senseless creatures, in reference to the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, he next shews what the carriage of God's children ought to be; and because it was a duty which all reason would speak for, and which none could contradict, therefore he speaks of it as a thing done already by them; the grounds and reasons of it were so clear, that in a manner it were a shame once to suppose, that believers, especially having tasted of the first-fruits of the Spirit, and so having been participant of the arles of glory, should come behind the very senseless creatures, in looking and longing for the marriage day, and so come short in this duty: therefore says he, *and not only they, but ourselves also*; as if he would say, If they do so, much more we should do so. So that the duty, which he tacitly, and yet very forcibly is pressing here is twofold, 1. *Groaning*, as under a heavy burden of sin and corruption, and the sad consequents thereof: and 2. *Waiting*, expecting, and looking for the *adoption*; that is, the day wherein believers shall be fully put in possession of all the privileges of, and good things promised to them, as the adopted children of God; of heaven and everlasting communion with the Father in glory, which is the inheritance purchased for them; and *the redemption of our bodies*, when they shall also be partakers of glory with our souls, being fully delivered from a body of death, and the slavery of sin, and also from corruption, and all the fruits of sin, being raised out of the grave again. Now this exhortation he strongly presseth by these reasons; 1. From the example of the senseless creatures, who

groan and look for the dawning of that day; and therefore it is a foul shame to think that believers should be outstriped by these, especially considering, 2. how *they have received the first-fruits of the Spirit*; they have already tasted of the good of glory, having grace begun in their soul, and some glorious blinks of God's loving countenance, persuading them of his love, calming their spirits, and making them to rejoice: And seeing the arles are so sweet, should not the bargain be longed for? and seeing the first-fruits are so desirable, how much more should the full harvest be desired. And, 3. he tells what it is they should look for, even that which is of near concernment to them; it is their adoption, and the redemption of their bodies, and so the benefit of that day will be more theirs than the creatures; and thus he stirreth them up to a patient way of suffering.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. To be taking a right list of sin and corruption, under which we ly, and to be mourning and groaning under the same daily, is an exercise well becoming the children of God: *Even we ourselves groan.*

II. This groaning and mourning, which floweth from a real sense and feeling of the oppression and slavery of a body of sin and death, and of the daily trouble we meet with from our spiritual enemies, should be real, and reach our hearts and inward parts; therefore says he, *we groan within ourselves.*

III. Tho' this groaning under sin and corruption, and under a distance from our Lord, be great, yet it should not mar our hope and expectation of a day of deliverance; yea, when it runeth in the right channell, it will be so far from justling out our hope, and blinding our eyes that we cannot see an outgate, that it will rather heighten our expectation; and the hope of a day of redemption should not extinguish all sorrow for our present condition, but these

these two go best in others arms, and each strengthens and rectifies the other: *We grone*, says he, *waiting*, &c.

IV. When we see the creatures groaning under the curse inflicted for our fault, and by a secret, instinct desiring and looking for the day of redemption, it should strongly convince us of our sin in short-coming in, and spur us up to, this duty of groaning and waiting, as being ashamed to be outstripped by the senseless and irrational creatures, and to have our slackness in this duty condemned by their carriage and deportment: *Not only so, but we also grone*, or at least should grone, and that to much the more that they do so.

V. Tho' Christ hath purchased completely what may serve to make his own happy here and hereafter, even grace and glory, and all things which serve to make them up; yet the infinitely wise God hath thought fit to keep them from the possession of the full for a while, that they may be kept in exercise, and God may get glory thereby; and all that he gives them now is but arles, and the first-fruits: *We who have the first-fruits of the Spirit*.

VI. Believers tho' they have an interest in Christ, and thro' faith in him have an undoubted right to glory; yet thro' the corruption of a false heart, and the continual assaults of Satan, that grand sophister, they are ready to doubt oftentimes, and call in question their right to the inheritance, and therefore have need of arles, or something to ground their hope and expectation, and assure them of their interest; and God is most willing that they should have hope and confidence, and therefore has given them of his Spirit, as first-fruits, to assure them that a good harvest is coming: *We have the first-fruits of the Spirit*. See 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 14.

VII. The Lord's bestowing his Spirit upon believers, to work grace in them, and so to lay the foundation of an everlasting building, should serve to confirm and persuade them of the truth of God's

promises, and assure them that they shall certainly enjoy the purchased possession; and also to move them to hope, and wait in patience, be their present lot what it will; for the apostle makes use of this, to stir them to a waiting for the adoption, that they have the first-fruits of the Spirit; *We who have the first-fruits of the Spirit*,---wait, or should at least so much the more do so: and it is the little looking to the graces of God's Spirit in them, that makes them much question their right to glory, and their darkness in this, occasions much fainting in adversity: The first-fruits give assurance of a harvest coming, and of a good crop.

VIII. Howbeit God's children receive of the gifts and graces of his Spirit here-away, some in a greater measure, and some in a lesser measure; and to some of them the Lord doth communicate of his gifts and graces in a large measure, yea, and manifesteth himself in a lively refreshful manner, *shedding abroad his love in their hearts*, Rom. v. 5. and so persuading them of his good-will towards them, having peace spoken to their consciences, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17.; yet all this, and whatever else they do or can enjoy in a present world, is but little in comparison of that which is laid up in store for them, against the day when they shall be put in possession of the full inheritance; it is but like the arles to the bargain, and the first-fruits to the full harvest; therefore all that they get on this side of eternity, is called but the first-fruits of the Spirit; *We have received the first-fruits of the Spirit*.

IX. As the graces which God worketh in the souls of his children, may fully persuade them, that he who hath begun a good work in them, will also perfect the same in his own time, and at length give them the full harvest, and so may abundantly encourage them to endure the worst of dispensations patiently; so the more of God's grace be in a soul, they will grone the

the more, that they are absent in the body from the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 2. 4. Phil. i. 23. and desire the more to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; grace will not puff them up, but make them mourn more under a body of death, and a weight of corruption, at least it should do so: *We who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, do grieve.*

X. Tho' the elect, upon their actual believing in, and joining in covenant with Christ, have a right to the promises and privileges belonging to the children of God, and are served heirs thereunto, John i. 12. and Rom. viii. 14. yet the day is but coming when they shall actually be put in possession of that whereof they have inheritance already, and shall be fully blessed in enjoying the company of their Father for ever and ever: the day of adoption is waited for; *waiting for the adoption.*

XI. Tho' Christ made a full and complete satisfaction, for his own, to justice, and laid down a full price for all the benefits which believers enjoy here or hereafter; yet is the actual communication or application of these good things purchased, suspended for a while; and though believers receive many of these good things hereaway, as pardon of sins, and the like, Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. and at death get their souls put in possession of glory; yet will they not have the whole of what is purchased, till death be swallowed up; the redemption reacheth even to our bodies at the last day, and is waited for; *waiting for the redemption of our bodies.*

XII. Tho' now our bodies be subject to much misery, pains, sickness, and the like, and must at length corrupt and rot away, so that after our death, *worms shall destroy our bodies*, Job xix. 26.; yet these very bodies of ours shall be fully delivered in the great day from all sin and misery, death and corruption, and that by virtue of the death and purchase of Christ; therefore it is called the *redemption of our bodies*; which word signifieth a full and every way complete deliverance out of bon-

dage and slavery, and that by the laying down of a ransom: See Eph. i. 14. and iv. 30.

VERSES 24. 25. *For we are saved by hope:*

But hope that is seen, is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

FOR the farther clearing of this duty of waiting for the adoption, and the full redemption of our bodies, he sheweth, how the hearts of believers are supported in the mean while when they want the possession of what Christ has purchased, or what their main exercise should be; and thereby evinceth, that the full possession of what is purchased, is yet but to come, and that therefore they should wait for it with patience. Take up the argument thus: If believers have at present the possession of full and final salvation only by hope, then the full possession is yet to come, and therefore they ought to wait for it with patience: But so it is that all the possession of salvation which they have at present is by hope; therefore says he, *We are saved by hope*: Hope is that which keeps up our head now, and whereby we win to the actual possession of the inheritance. The first part of the consequence he sets down, verse 24. in these words, *But hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* As if he had said, If we are now to hope for the adoption, then the full adoption, complete redemption, is not yet attained, nor seen, for what a man seeth, he needeth not hope for; the thing hoped for (for that is it which he meaneth, when he says, *But hope that is seen*,) is always a thing which is not in possession, but out of sight. The next is set down, verse 25. *But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it*: As if he had said, Seeing hope is only for that which

we see not, and we do indeed hope, then should we with patience wait for that which hope eyeth, or for the adoption, or the redemption of our bodies.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Though believers have not, nor yet shall have actual and full possession of the inheritance of life purchased, until the day of the redemption of all things, when their bodies shall be made incorruptible; yet even here-away their hearts are kept up, and notwithstanding of the many storms in their faces, and contrary tides of sad dispensations which they meet with, yet they have, or at least may have, a life of it, would they do their duty, and make use of the grounds allowed; thus are they said to be *saved*, even here-away.

II. It is true and saving hope (which is a grace of the Spirit of God, whereby a believer, having his faith grounded upon the promises, and looking to God's goodness, power, and truth, in promising and accomplishing what is promised, doth surely expect the thing promised,) which keeps up the head of a believer above the water, and keeps him from sinking under discouragement; hence it is called *a lively hope*, 1 Pet. i. 3. and is as an *anchor*, Heb. iv. 19. and a *helmet*, 1 Theff. v. 8.; thus we are said to be *saved by hope*.

III. Though the *hope of the hypocrite shall perish*, Job viii. 13. 14. and xi. 20. Prov. xi. 7. being grounded on a sandy foundation, and having no faith to fasten its feet on, and so can yield no life, comfort, or support, in a day of darkness or adversity; yet this hope, which is peculiar to such as have received the first fruits of the Spirit, (however the carnal sensualists think it impossible, that ever a man's heart can be kept up, so long as his hand is empty, and sense is not satisfied, yet it) is able to quicken him, 1 Pet. i. 3. and support him in temptations and discouragements, yea, and give him a life of it, yea, and a life of joy, Rom. v. 3. and xii. 12.;

it is able to keep him from fainting or succumbing, and is the only way to win to the actual possession; for *we are saved by hope*.

IV. The object of hope is always something to come, which is promised and not yet had in possession, and hope taketh it up even as a thing absent, which faith gives a kind of spiritual subsistence and being unto, by eyeing the promises, and resting on them, Heb. xi. 1.; *Hope that is seen, is not hope*; that is, hope cannot be exercised about that which is seen and possessed; hope in the first place, being put for the thing hoped for, as, Col. i. 5. 1 Tim. i. 1. Tit. ii. 13.

V. This is only the time for hope to be exercised, for when once we are put in full possession, hope shall cease, and give way to vision, 1 Cor. xiii. 13.: *For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

VI. True and lively hope takes up its object as so excellent and good in itself, and to them, that it has always with it a serious longing desire to be partaker of the good thing hoped for, and a groaning thro' grief because of the want of it, for it is the same *we*, that were said to *groan*, verse 23. that are now said to have hope by which they are saved; *We are saved by hope*.

VII. True and lively hope will ride out in a day of storm; and make a man look through all impediments that are in his way, and endure tribulation with patience, and will keep up a man's spirit, so as he shall not sink under the water of afflictions within or without, but endure to the end: *If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it*. The stronger and the more lively hope be, the more courage and resolution have we, and the more able are we to endure the worst, and not to flinch or flee back.

VIII. True and lively hope will keep a man from fretting and grudging at the want of what is expected, and teach him to carry himself christianly and submissively,

ly, without venting any discontentment; and it is the want of this grace in exercise, which makes many give over looking for the crown, and be filled with malecontentment and quarreling; for hope will cause one wait with patience: *If we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

VERSES 26. 27. *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.

NOW the apostle proceeds unto a fourth argument, whereby to encourage believers unto a patient and christian way of walking under crosses, and to a willingness to endure them for the cause of Christ; and it is taken from the help they have; they have a good second to lend them a lift. Tho' afflictions be indeed sad and heavy, if we consider our strength who are to bear them, yet we are not alone under them, the heaviest part is born by the Spirit, and therefore we need not flinch nor be discouraged, though tribulation be like to master us. And this encouragement he sets down, 1. in general, with a *likewise*, knitting it to the fore-mentioned arguments, as of force for that end also, saying, *The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities*; that is, the burden of afflictions-being too heavy for our weak backs, who have much weakness in us, even the best of us, and so utterly unable to wrestle ourselves alone with crosses, the Spirit of God steps in, and, as it were, puts his shoulder under the other end of the load, under which our back is like to crack, and thus *helpeth also*. And, 2. he descends to a particular, for the more full explication

of this, in these words, *We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*: that is, when we are under affliction, we are so confused, jumbled, and overwhelmed, that we know not how to carry ourselves, and order our matters, and therefore we have great need of a guide and director; and in particular, we know not what to pray for aright; our minds are so confused and perplexed, that we know not well what makes for us; and are ready to seek that which is hurtful; and herein kyths much of our weakness; for were we improving prayer aright in the time of affliction, we would be more able to bear the burden than we are; and now when we know not what, nor after what manner, to pray, the Spirit of God *makes intercession*; that is, (not as if he were properly our intercessor, for that is Christ's office only, 1 John ii. 1. but) he seteth us on work, and prompteth us to call upon God with great earnestness and vehemence, for so the word importeth; suggesting matter unto us, and bringing the promises to our memory, John xvi. 13. stirring up our graces, and ordering our perturbed and perplexed affections; thus he teacheth us to pray; and when we cannot speak, he helpeth us with *groans*, or *sighs*, which cannot be uttered; such feelings, pangs, and gripings of heart, which are so efficacious and fervent, as none can express, and which possibly ourselves take not much notice of, nor perceive, at least know not that such are raised and suggested by the Spirit, and are forcible prayers unto God. 3. For the further illustration of this, he obviateth an objection, verse 27. they might say, Seeing all the prayers we make are but groans, and such groans as cannot be uttered, what the better will we be of them? we cannot well perceive them ourselves, and how shall we think to be bettered thereby? To this he answereth; What though you do not well understand these

theſe grones, yet God taketh notice of them, for *he ſearcheth the hearts*, he knoweth what lurketh in them, and there is nothing hid from him; and not only doth he, by an act of omnſcience, know that there is ſuch motions there, but alſo he approveth of them, and graciously accepteth of them; well knows he what they mean, *he knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit*. And how comes it that he accepteth of theſe gronings? The answer is added, *becauſe he maketh interceſſion for the ſaints, according to the will of God*: That is, he helpeth the ſaints, ſuch who are perfectly juſtified, and walk perfectly and ſincerely, to ſend up deſires according to the mind of God; both as to the matter, it muſt be agreeable to the rule; and manner, that is, holily; and for a right end; and thus it is according to God.

From Verſe 26th OBSERVE,

I. It is no eaſy matter to get the heart brought to a willingneſs, and condeſcending ſubmiſſion unto God's diſpenſations in ſending ſad afflictions; nor to a chriſtian and ſanctified way of walking under the yoke of affliction; and therefore believers have need of many inducements and ſtrong arguments, to ſtir them up to this chriſtian duty; and the apoſtle accumulaterh many moving arguments, and moreover, brings in this with a *likewiſe*; *Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth, &c.*

II. Albeit believers be perfectly juſtified and reconciled to God, yet being but in part ſanctified, there is much corruption yet ſticking in them, and much weakneſs, lything at every occaſion, whereby the Lord would have us kept humble and in exerciſe, conſtantly depending on him for ſtrength and ſupply: therefore there is mention here made of *infirmities*; *he helpeth our infirmities*.

III. Afflictions and croſſes, how ſeckleſs and inconfiderable ſoe'er they appear to be, yet they will put the ſtrongest that ſteps to their peremptors, and make the weak-

neſs of their back, and ſmallneſs of their ſtrength, appear; ſo that they ſhall not be able to ſtand under the weight of it alone, nor be able to endure without help; therefore ſays he, *our infirmities*, putting himſelf in the ſame category with the reſt.

IV. As none, having corruption with-in them and a body of death, which is ready to comply with Satan in every temptation, are able to ſtand upon their own legs in the day of affliction and temptation, even tho' they have a new nature, and the principle of grace created in them; ſo it is only by virtue of the Spirit of God, and the help and aſſiſtance which he affordeth, ſupporting their ſpirits, clearing an out-gate, and bearing home the promiſes upon the heart, that any are kept from fainting and ſuccumbing in a day of affliction: *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities*; that is, the Holy Spirit ſendeth down virtue and ſtrength, whereby they are made to ſtand in the day of battle.

V. Albeit the ſaints of God cannot ſtand if they be left to themſelves, but will certainly ſuccumb and faint in the day of adverſity, but muſt be helped and aſſiſted by the Spirit of God; yet this aſſiſtance and aid yielded by the Spirit, doth not make them mere ſtocks and ſtones, nor looſe them from a patient ſuffering of the ſame; they muſt, notwithstanding, be wreſtling under them, and acting their graces in bearing them willingly and chearfully; for *the Spirit but helpeth our infirmities*: Tho' he take a liſt of our burden, yet he doth not quite take it off our ſhoulders, ſo as we are to do nothing; but tho' it be little that we can do without the aſſiſtance of the Spirit, yet are we to ſet to our ſhoulder, and handſomely take it on. The word here rendered, *alſo helpeth*, importeth, a coming in to relieve a man under a burden, which he is not able to bear alone, and ſo taking a liſt of the other end of the load.

VI. It ſhould much encourage and hearten believers, to a chriſtian and ſubmiſſive

missive carriage under affliction and crosses, to know that they have not the whole burden to bear themselves alone, but have an excellent and strong second to succour and help them, when they think they are ready to faint and give it over; and it is the little knowledge of, and trusting to this, which makes many faint in the day of adversity: this is the argument he useth to persuaide them to a cheerful willingness to endure crosses, that *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities*.

VII. Prayer in faith is a notable means to support and keep up a fainting soul in the day of adversity; and it is the want of the exercise of this which makes them feeble and unfit for bearing the cross: prayer upon sure grounds, would discover the other side of the trouble, and fetch down present supply, and so keep up the heart under it; for this is the way that the Spirit helps believers, by teaching them to pray, and so *making intercession for them*.

VIII. So strong is corruption in the best, that oftentimes when afflictions ly on them, they are so confounded, their minds so darkned, their spirits so jumbled, and their affections so put through-other, that they know not what is fit for their case, and so are ready to ask what is not for their behoof, 2 Cor. xii. 7. or to ask too hastily and peremptorily, what they are not fit for as yet; and so though they know the misery into which they ly, yet they know not what is best for them in that case, whether it be better to ly still there, that their faith may be thoroughly tried, 1 Pet. i. 6. 7. or to be delivered therefrom; nor know they how to ask these things with submission, as to the time when, and manner how, they shall be made out, and in faith grounded on a promise: *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought*.

IX. As we must have *all our works wrought in us*, Phil. ii. 13. that through the whole course of Christianity we may be humble; so we cannot do so much as pray of ourselves at any time, and far less

in a day of distress and tribulation; but our prayers, if they be of the right sort, must be pened to us by the Spirit of God, so that tho' many who are utter strangers to the Spirit, may utter words, yea, thereby expresse their desires of that which they seek, yet they cannot pray aright, being void of the Spirit, who only teacheth to pray aright: thus *the Spirit maketh intercession for us*; that is, helpeth and assisteth us to present right supplications to the throne of grace.

X. As many a time trouble may be heavy upon the back of God's people, they cannot get a word spoken to God in prayer, but only be able to *chatter like a crane*; and to *mourn like a dove*, Isa. xli. 14. and so to grone and sigh; so groanings, flowing from heart pangs and gripings, are prayers and supplications in God's account, being kindled by the Spirit of God, and stirred up by him, they should be so acknowledged by him, thus *the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanes*.

XI. Tho' the trouble ly so sore upon us, it presses us so heavily, that we cannot get a word up to God; yet if our heart feel the Spirit, ly be sending up such sighs and groanings, are excited by the Spirit, we should be content on that as the Spirit's contributing help to us, and succouring us in our adversity, and thereby should comfort ourselves under the trouble, and patiently endure the same: *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities by making intercession for us, with groanings*.

XII. Altho' it be us who grone and cry up to God, and not the Holy Spirit, yet we should be so dead and self-denied in our prayers and actions, as if we did nothing less nor more, but the Spirit did all; as if we were merely passive, that the glory might be his, who is the chief actor in the matter; therefore the Spirit only helps us to grone, to supplicate, it is said, that *the Spirit himself makes intercession with groanes*. See Rom. iv. 6.

XIII. So fore may the gripings and pangs of a poor believer be under sad and heavy affliction, that he may send up groans and hearty sighs, which none can make language of, nor well express what grief, or what vehement desire is at the bottom of them: *Groans which cannot be uttered.*

XIV. Tho' believers, under sad and fore affliction, may think all gone, especially when they cannot get a word to speak to God prayer-ways; yet even then the Spirit of God may be at their heart-roots, blowing up some sparks of groanings and sighings, tho' they perceive it not, nor advert to it; thus *groans which cannot be uttered* may be understood.

From verse 27th OBSERVE,

I. The Lord is thoroughly acquainted with all our hearts, and every thing which is within them, and knoweth every corner thereof perfectly; yea, it is his prerogative royal, and one of his magnificent titles and styles which he denominateth himself by; so that it doth not belong to the devils, who only can conjecture by external signs; and there are many things in a man's own heart which he is not privy to himself; therefore the Lord is described by this, that *he searcheth the hearts*: Not that he needeth be at any pains to find out the windings and turnings, and strange things which are there, as the word would import, which is taken from men searching, digging and delving for some mineral, or from sagacious dogs who find out their prey by the scent; but that he is as privy to, and well acquainted with, every corner of our heart, as if he had taken such and such pains to find it out: See 1 Cor. ii. 10. Lev. ii. 23.

II. This omniscience of God, and his perfect knowledge of every thing within our hearts, as it should teach us to address ourselves to him alone in prayer, because he is only able to hear; so it should

strengthen our faith and hope of a hearing of our desires and groans, when we cannot get words wherewith to express our mind to God: thus he obviateth the objection, by saying, *And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.*

III. Tho' many a time when we are overwhelmed with sorrow and affliction, we cannot tell what to make of our case, nor what construction to put upon our carriage, nor what sense to put upon our sighs and heavy groans, that flow from our very hearts; yet this should comfort us, that God can spell these ill printed letters, and can make sense out of these senseless-like expressions: he knows what they would say, and what the meaning of such groans is, and accepteth of them as pious and efficacious prayers; *he knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.*

IV. We may be assured that God will have respect unto, and hear such groans and sighs in his own, tho' they think little thing of them, seeing they are stirred up by his own Spirit in them; therefore it is said, *he knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.*

V. Tho' believers have much corruption in them, and may therefore run daily to the fountain for cleansing; yet having on the righteousness of Christ, which is complete, and having new principles of grace within them, whereby they are made sincere and honest in their aims and endeavours, and being renewed in the whole man, so as sanctification is begun in all its parts; they are here called *saints*.

VI. Tho' common gifts may prompt up many who are void of grace, to utter words in a most flowing and eloquent manner, and so many such may thereupon give out themselves to have the Spirit, as who but they; yet it is only proper to these who have fled in to Christ, and are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God, to have the Spirit interceding for them, by

prompting and stirring them up to pray and call on God: *He maketh intercession for the saints.*

VII. Whatever prayers are formed in the heart by the Spirit of God, they are always according to the rule of his word, both as to matter and manner; and in so far as believers seek either what is not warranted, or seek in a wrong manner, or from a wrong end, that which is warranted, and allowed, they swerve from the Spirit, their guide and instructor: *The Spirit maketh intercession according to the will of God.*

VIII. Whenever we are assisted by the Spirit, to pray for such things as are lawful and expedient, and pray in faith, and for a right end, we may be assured that we shall get the thing we ask, or as good, 2 Cor. xii. 8. 9. and that in God's own time and manner, he being *the bearer of prayers*, Psalm. lxxv. 2. and we having a promise therefore, Matth. vii. 7. and xxi. 22. Mark xi. 24. Luke xi. 9. 10. 11. John xvi. 24. James v. 6.: for this is another ground upon which he would have believers rest confident that their desires shall be heard, *because the Spirit maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.*

VERSE 28. *And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

THIS, and the following two verses, contain a fifth motive which the apostle maketh use of, to persuade them to a patient suffering of crosses. The motive is set down in this verse, and confirmed in the following verses: The motive is this; Afflictions and crosses are so far from wronging us, that we are the better of them; and so if we be the better of afflictions, why should we shun them? And by this also he confirmeth the last argument, or motive, by answering an objection which they might start, and say,

You tell us, that our prayers and groanings will be heard; but how is it so, seeing afflictions ly still upon us and press us, for all that? He answereth; Our prayers are heard notwithstanding of that, because we reap no disadvantage by them, but much good; therefore says he, *We know*; it is a generally known maxim in religion which none can deny, and whereof we are certain, that *all things*, that is, all sorts of afflictions and crosses, (for tho' this will hold true of many other things beside afflictions, yet it is safest to restrict it to these, seeing Paul is only speaking of them;) *work together for good*; that is, as it were, they work all to others hands, and every one helps forward the good of another, and so they all drive at one end, viz. the good of believers, who were before called *saints*, and here, *them that love God* truly and sincerely. But now, lest any should think that either this love was not wrought in them by the Spirit, or that there were any merit in it as to the procuring of this good by afflictions; therefore he addeth a further restriction, and thereby riseth higher, until he come to the prime cause of all, and saith, *to them who are the called*, that is, effectually, to faith in Christ, whence love floweth; for it is to them who are the called *according to his purpose*, his firm and free decree and resolution; and from this floweth effectual calling, and all the good which afflictions bring along with them. This word *purpose*, is here to be restricted, and not to be taken in so large a sense as to comprehend his whole act of providence, for *he ruleth all things according to the counsel of his own will*, and so *according to his purpose*, Eph. i. 11. and iii. 11. nor as it comprehends election and reprobation, Rom. ix. 11. but as it holdeth forth the fixed and determined resolution of God concerning the elect ones; and so it signifieth a firm and fixed resolution, as it were, after mature deliberation, what way he intendeth to dispose of them; and so it cannot be taken for our purpose, but for

for God's, if the apostle's own commentary may be admitted; 2 Tim. i. 9. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Though for the present no chastening, or affliction, seemeth joyous, but grievous, Heb. xii. 11. yet how bitter soever it be in itself, and poisonous like, God can make it medicinal, and doth so manage and temperate it to his own, as that it doth not prove noxious, but many ways useful, both to keep them from security and negligence, to stir them up to prayer, Psalm x. 1. lxxxvi. 7. and l. 15. to exercise their faith, 1 Pet. i. 7. patience, Rom. v. 3. love, desire, and other graces, and to loose their affections from a world, and to inflame their desires more after heaven: thus, *afflictions worketh good to them that love God*, discovering their graces or infirmities, God's strength and readiness to help, and faithfulness in keeping promise to them, at that time.

II. Howbeit believers be beset many a time with troubles and afflictions, and tossed betwixt wind and wave, and shaken with contrary tides of tribulation, and meet with sometimes outward affliction, sometimes inward, and sometimes both at once, as David's case may clear often-times; yet all these contrary winds serve to blow them home to their harbour of happiness, and tendeth to their rich advantage; and however contrary they be one to another, they all concur to the promoting of the common good of believers; and thro' God's wise and supreme over-ruling hand, contrary to Satan's intention, they further their good, as with one shoulder jointly; and so they *work together for good to them*.

III. That afflictions, contrary to their own nature, do help forward and work out the good of believers, is a truth so confirmed by the experience of his children

in all ages, that now it ought to be received as an undoubted axiom, and infallible conclusion, by all: *We know*, says he.

IV. The fixed belief, and christian use-making of this christian axiom, *That all afflictions of all kinds work together for good to them that love God*, will keep up a man's spirit, and keep him from sinking, in the day of adversity; and it is the little belief of the truth of this, and the little conscience making of drawing strengthening conclusions from this principle of Christianity, and the little studying, or searching, how God is making this good, that occasioneth our discouragement in the day of trouble, and fainting in the day of adversity: This is the motive he maketh use of here, whereby to encourage them in the day of affliction, viz. *That all things work together for their good*.

V. Believers being now made partakers of the sweet fruits and effects of God's everlasting love, wherewith he loved them, Jer. xxxi. 3. and having their hearts warmed with these rays, cannot but send up reflex rays back; though once they hated him, yet now their affections are centered on him, their faith works by love, Gal. v. 6. and the love of God oileth their wheels, and sets them on work, 2 Cor. v. 14. This is an essential mark of believers, and therefore they are thus stiled such *as love God*, 1 Cor. ii. 9. James i. 12. and ii. 5. which kytheth in a conscionable care of all his precepts, 1 John v. 3. and an hearty warmth to all that carry the image of Christ, 1 John iv. 20.: so are they here called, *them that love God*.

VI. As afflictions upon the godly flow not from hatred in God, & every dispensation doth to the wicked, but rather speak out love, Heb. xii. 6: 8. Rev. iii. 19. whatever they themselves may think, being under a temptation; so should not their love cool towards him, with whatsoever dispensations he be exercising them; then is the time wherein their love should kyth most in sticking close to him, even when his

his dispensations would say to sense, that he has no affection towards them, then should they be answerable to this their description, that they are such as love God: and for this cause doth the apostle stile them, rather such as love God, than *saints*, or *believers*; thereby to point out their duty at that time.

VII. When believers, wrestling under sad dispensations and sore afflictions, begin to have jealous thoughts of God and of his love, and their affections cool toward him; they mar much of the good fruits of affliction which would redound to them otherways, and prejudge themselves exceedingly: for his saying, *That all things work together for good to them that love God*, says, that as it is only believers who enjoy this benefit, so it is believers exercising love, and keeping that fresh and lively, who partake of this: see James i. 12.

VIII. Whatever hypocrites or other unconverted persons within the visible church may pretend to, and however they may imagine in themselves, and give it out to others, that they love God; yet this true christian conjugal love is not a flower which groweth in any of our gardens by nature, and so it is not common to all, but proper and peculiar to them that are led by the Spirit of God, effectually brought out of darkness, to a welcoming of Jesus Christ offered in the gospel, and receiving of him upon his own terms: for he explains whom he meaneth, when he says, *them that love God*, by adding, *them that are the called*.

IX. Such is our weakness now in the state of nature, that we cannot, and such is our love to this condition that we desire not to come out of it; we are deaf and dead by nature, Eph. ii. 1. like dry bones about the graves mouth, Ezek. xxvii. 1. 2. *cast out into the open fields*, Ezek. xvi. 5. we neither can, nor will stir, Rom. viii. 7. 8. nor mind we ever to come home, but walk on like wandering sheep; and therefore we must be called by the Spirit of God,

before we believe: hence they are named *the called*.

X. This change whereby a poor sinner is brought out of darkness, and the *dom of Satan*, Acts xvi. 18. to *light into the grace of Christ*, Gal. i. 6. to a *peace of glory*, Eph. iv. 4. Col. i. 5. *peace of glory*, Col. iii. 15. to a *kingdom and glory*, 1 Thes. ii. 12. and *holiness*, 1 Thes. iv. 7. to *eternal life*, 1 Tim. vi. 12. *into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. and *into eternal life*, 1 Pet. v. 10. and *to glory and virtue*, 2 Pet. i. 3. is not a work of ours, but a work of the Spirit of God, convincing us of our sin and misery, and inwardly illuminating our minds to see Christ, and renewing our wills, and efficaciously persuading us to be open to Christ, and receive him here and cheerfully; it is not a work done by the strength of nature, or any thing in us, he is merely passive; therefore *the called* to be called.

XI. As man doth not contribute anything to his effectual calling, so he doth be any way procure, merit, nor deserve the same, by any goodness or holiness in himself, so that it is an act of free grace, Tit. iii. 5.: and therefore it is here named *to be according to his purpose*, and the *clusters works of ours*, 2 Tim. i. 9.

XII. As there is an outward and external calling, whereby men and women are brought from Paganism to serve the living God, do openly profess subjection unto him, many more than such as are chosen to be made partakers of, Matth. xx. 16. xxii. 14.; so there is an inward call, which is not so common as the other, and where none partake of but such as God has by his thoughts and purposes of good to bring to eternity, and so it is named, a calling according to his purpose, 2 Tim. i. 9.: *that are called according to his purpose*.

XIII. God who is absolute and independent, hath, from all eternity, out of free grace, freely resolved and purposed with himself, whom, and when to

in to Chriſt; and all theſe, and theſe only, whom he has choſen to himſelf, will in due time be effectually called in to Chriſt, Acts ii. 47. and xiii. 48.; *the called according to his purpoſe,*

XIV. Whatever good accrue to believers by afflictions, they ſhould beware of imputing that to any deſerving in themſelves, but ſhould look higher to another ſpring, and ſee the riſe of it in the free and unchangeable purpoſe of God: for he leads them up to this fountain, ſaying, *To them who are the called according to his purpoſe.*

XV. God may prove himſelf the hearer of prayers, and may answer the groans of his own children, which they ſend up in a time of affliction, tho' affliction continue and be not taken off, by beſtowing upon them as good, or better, making them phyſical and healthful: for this verſe may be looked on (as we ſhewed in the explanation) as answering an objection of this nature, from the laſt verſe.

VERSES 29. 30. *For whom he did fore-know, he alſo did predeſtinate to be con-formed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren.*

Moreover, whom he predeſtinate, them he alſo called: and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified: and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

IN theſe verſes, the apoſtle confirmeth his laſt argument, which was this, That all things work together for good to theſe that love God, being called according to the purpoſe and decree of God; therefore we ſhould be content of afflictions when the Lord is pleaſed to carve them out to us. Now that all things work together for good to ſuch, he proveth thus; If ſuch who are the called according to his purpoſe have had a room in his eſtimation and affection, and out of his mere good-will and pleaſure, were predeſtinated and elected to eternal life, to conformi-

ty to Chriſt's image in glory, as adopted children of God; and if God ſo ſurely did ordain and elect them to life, as that, in time, he appointed effectually to bring them to ſalvation, and to the actual poſſeſſion of glory, by the means appointed, and ſo in his decree knit with an indiſſolvable tie, life, and all the means leading to life; then ſure afflictions cannot wrong ſuch, but may rather work for their good; for what can wrong ſuch whom God has everlaſtingly decreed to bring to life, and effectually to bring about the means whereby they ſhall certainly be brought to life: But ſo it is, that God hath had thoughts of good towards ſuch, having foreknown them, and predeſtinated them to glory, *even to be conformed to the image of his Son,* verſe 29. and that ſo, that alſo he hath firmly decreed to bring about the means leading towards life, as effectual calling, and juſtification, and at length glorification, verſe 30. Here then is a golden chain of ſalvation, wherein the firſt riſe of it, the progreſs, and period of it, are ſweetly and excellently linked together, every link whereof is more maſſy than another, and all of them full of conſolation; which for clearneſs we ſhall further explain. And 1. then, he ſays, *Whom he foreknew;* foreknowledge may import, God's preſcience, or knowledge of things before they come to paſs, as Acts ii. 23! but here it is more comprehensive, taking in with it God's favour and good-will, and ſo imports as much as fore-acknowledged, and is ſuch a knowledge, by which he ſeevereth his people from the reſt, and ſo includes an act of his will, as being the ſame, upon the matter, with his decree, Rom. xi. 20. and with *the good pleaſure of his will,* Eph. i. 5. for there, as here, predeſtination followeth; and thus we are ſaid to be *elected according to the foreknowledge of God,* 1 Pet. i. 2. ſo then, this is a foreknowledge of favour and good-will; according to which the Lord is ſaid to know his own, Pſal. i. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 19. and whom he rejects, he ſaid

said not to know, Matth. xxv. 12. 2. He says, *Whom he foreknew, them he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son*; the word predestinated is sometimes used of things, and then, be they good or evil, it signifieth a certain decree and purpose, that such and such things shall come to pass, as 1 Cor. ii. 7. where it is rendered, *ordained*; so Acts iv. 28. where it is rendered, *ordained before*: sometimes of men, and then it signifieth, a pre-ordaining them unto a certain end, a purposing and resolving to bring them to such or such an end; and so here, the end is, *to be conformed to the image of his Son*; this we take to be main. That which is called, Eph. i. 5. *the adoption of children*, to which they are said to be predestinated, and that is actual possession of the heavenly inheritance; therefore it is said, *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, to shew that this is mainly meant of adoption, that we shall be sons also *and if sons, then heirs*, verse 17. and so in this respect, we will be *changed into the same image, from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. and *made like him, for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. and *when Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory*, Col. iii. 4. And thus we take predestination here as restricted, (tho' we grant it may be taken, as including both election and reprobation; and again, if restricted to election, as including both the means and the end) which we are further confirmed to do, by the following words, *that he might be the first-born among many brethren*; so that the conformity to his image is in this, that they are brethren, and so it lieth in adoption; and their being conformed to him in this, makes his glory to appear the more, as the first born; we partake of the same glory with him, but he has a greater share; *who is the head of the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*, Col. i. 8. 2. The other link of this chain, is, verse 30. *Moreover, whom he did predesti-*

nate, them he also called; having thus set down the nearest end, (for the remote end of all this work, is God's glory, Eph. i. 6.) he proceeds to shew the means which God hath appointed, and which he actually effectuateth in his due time, whereby this end may be attained; and the first is effectual calling, whereby such as he foreknew, are called out of darkness into light, and brought to an union with Jesus Christ: And again, *whom he called, them he justified*; that is, whom he brought in to Christ, and united to him by faith, those he accepted as righteous, thro' Christ's righteousness imputed; so that first they are united to Christ in their effectual calling, and after faith are justified and acquitted before God, from all their guilt; and being thus *justified, they are glorified*; that is, they are sanctified here, and glorified perfectly hereafter; sanctification is begun glorification, holiness here being glory in the bud; and he says, *glorified*, in the præteritive time, both to shew, that in a manner it is begun already, and that it shall certainly be perfected. So that it appeareth to be a most corrupt gloss, to say, that the apostle is only speaking of God's appointing, and calling folks to afflictions, and justifying them from the false calumnies and aspersions of the wicked, and thus glorifying them, and all this after the manner that Christ was dealt with. For 1 the apostle made use of such a motive before, verse 17. as there we shewed, and we cannot think that he would go over it again. 2. The words in the last verse will cross this; for there he says, that such as he is here speaking of, are *called according to his purpose*; now we no where read, that any called, are thus stiled, *the called to crosses*: we find some called *saints*, Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 2. and *called to holiness*, 1 Thes. iv. 7. *virtue*, 2 Pet. i. 3. and *grace*, Gal. i. 6. and *to glory*, Eph. iv. 4. Col. 5. 1 Thess. ii. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 12. 1 Pet. v. 10. 2 Pet. i. 3. but no where called to afflictions, except by the bye, 1 Pet. v. 10; and far less do we

we find, that they are said to be *called according to his purpose*, which always is found to be to *grace and glory*, Eph. i. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. Rom. ix. 11. 3. Neither will these same verses suffer it; For (1.) this foreknowledge is not of crosses, but such as hath election following it, 1 Pet. i. 2. (2.) Predestination is always to something as our end, and so not to crosses. (3.) Many meet with afflictions who are never justified; and justification here, must be taken as it is always taken thro' this epistle, and it is mentioned as a special link of the chain, and not occasionally named. (4.) Many are afflicted that are never glorified; yea, many may be absolved from the unjust condemnations of men before God, (if we should thus grant the word justified to be so taken here) who shall never be glorified. 4. The following part of the chapter will also cross this interpretation; for there it is shown, who these are of whom he is speaking here, *viz.* such as Christ died for, and have *all things* else, verse 32. such as have nothing to be *laid to their charge*, verse 33. and whom nothing *shall separate from the love of God*, verses 35. 38. and these things cannot be meant of such as meet with crosses.

From Verse 29. OBSERVE,

I. Tho' it be a truth beyond questioning, confirmed by the experience of the children of God in all ages, that afflictions of all sorts work together for good to them that love God; yet it will be no small difficulty to get our hearts brought to a solid belief of the truth of this, in the day when we meet with crosses, so as to gather comfort and encouragement therefrom; but whatever it appear to us when we are not put to the trial, yet when we are under the lash of afflictions, it will then seem scarcely credible: Therefore, albeit it was an undoubted maxim, yet the apostle seeth some necessity to make it good by strong reason, and therefore addeth this as

a reason to confirm it, *For whom he foreknew, &c.*

II. If we once were clear that God from all eternity had thoughts of love towards us, and had purposed effectually to bring us to the actual possession of glory, we would not be so afraid of crosses, as we are ordinarily: It is our ignorance as to this which makes crosses so terrible to us; for this he addeth as a reason, to confirm, that afflictions work together for the best to them that love God, because *he hath foreknown, and predestinated them, &c.*

III. Tho' it be a matter full of difficulty for believers to get assurance and clearness as touching their election, and a business requiring all diligence and study, 2 Pet. i. 10.; yet they may win to so much knowledge hereof, as may yield them matter of joy and rejoicing, Luke x. 20. and comfort them in a time of affliction, 1 Pet. i. 2. and confirm them that all afflictions shall work together for their good; as here, it is given as a ground to confirm them of the truth of that which he said, *viz.* That all things work together for good to the called, because such as are effectually called, were comprehended under God's everlasting purpose and decree of election; and so by the one they may win in to know the other: *For whom he foreknew, them he predestinated.*

IV. Albeit the doctrine of predestination be intricate and full of difficulties; yet may and ought the servants of God teach the truth thereof, and his children study it, seeing it is most useful to humble people, to strengthen our faith and hope, to yield comfort and consolation in times of adversity, and to stir up to thankfulness and love, providing it be done with due moderation and spiritual prudence, and according to the grounds laid down in the word of truth, and not according to man's carnal reason; after the example of the apostle, who doth clearly hold forth this doctrine here, and several times inculcates

the truth of it elsewhere, as Eph. i. 5. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will:* and here, *Whom he foreknew, these he did predestinate.*

V. As all things are naked and bare before the eyes of God, Heb. iv. 13. and by his omniscience, he did foresee whatever cometh to pass in time; so in a special manner did he take notice, and approve of such as he would bring home to himself, and make partakers of glory, and these he is said to foreknow: *Whom he foreknew.*

VI. Albeit the Lord, being every way free from all imperfection, needeth not consult and advise before-hand what to resolve upon and purpose, as man needeth, who is ignorant of what is best; yet all his decrees, purposes and resolutions are most wise, deliberate and righteous, as most advisedly done, and as it were upon most mature deliberation; his will is always accompanied with firm and sure knowledge, and most wise counsel: For here it is said, that *whom he foreknew, them he did predestinate.*

VII. Tho' it be true, that God hath decreed that such as believe, and persevere in faith to the end, shall be saved; yet it cannot be said, that this is all which is meant by the decree of predestination, as if God thereby had done no more but appointed such an order and law; for if that were all, it might come to pass, that notwithstanding of this act of predestination, not one man should ever have been saved; whereas predestination is, to conformity to Christ's image, and *to the adoption of children*, Eph. i. 5. and *to life*, Acts xiii. 48. but predestination is touching the event and end of particular persons, particularly, and by name, as it were, condescended on; so that some are hereby particularly designed, and hence named *the elect*, Mark xiii. 20. Matth. xx. 16. Rom. xi. 7. and thus *the Lord knoweth who are his*, 2 Tim. ii. 19.: therefore he says, *Whom*

he foreknew, them he predestinated; as meaning some particular, designed, and known persons.

VIII. Predestination, or election, is not of all and every man, but only of some on whom the Lord pitched his love from eternity, and purposed to bring to life in Christ; for it is meant of some individual persons, excluding others, when he says, *Whom he foreknew, these he did predestinate*, &c. and none others.

IX. This decree of predestination, as it is absolute and complete, so is it definite; and the number of such who are predestinated to life is so certain and definite, that it can neither be increased nor diminished: For *whom he foreknew, these*, and none but these, and all these, not a man excepted, *he predestinated.* See 2 Tim. ii. 19. John xiii. 18.

X. This love and respect which God carrieth to his own chosen, is of an old date, it takes not its beginning in time, but being an immanent act of God, and so God himself, who is one most simple act; it is eternal, long before ever they had a being, save in his decree: thus he is said to love his own with *an everlasting love*, Jer. xxxi. 3. and this the very purport of the words, *foreknown* and *predestinated*, do shew forth.

XI. This love, good-will, and good pleasure of God, is the fountain of all good which we partake of here or hereafter; all grace and glory floweth from this spring and well-head; for this foreknowledge is the fountain of election, vocation, justification, and glorification: *whom he foreknew, those he predestinated*, &c.

XII. The cause why the Lord did predestinate some to life, and others not, is not because he foreknew, that such would believe and persevere in faith to the end, and the rest would not, for then this election should be most uncertain, and depend upon man's free will, which is most uncertain; contrary to 2 Tim. ii. 19. *Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure,*
hava-

having this seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are his.* Rom. ix. 11. *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.* But the only cause is, *the good pleasure of his will,* Eph. i. 5. *his own free grace,* Rom. xi. 5. and *will,* Exod. xxxiii. 19. Rom. ix. 15. and *firm purpose,* Rom. ix. 11. and here, his foreknowledge; for, *whom he did foreknow, these he did predestinate.*

XIII. So rich and wonderful has this love of God towards such whom he foreknew been, that the life which he had appointed for them should be no less than the same in kind, in a manner, as that which his only Son Jesus Christ, as Mediator, hath in glory; he ordained them to no less, than to be sharers of that same glory which Christ enjoyeth: and thus they are said, to be *like him,* 1 John iii. 2. and to *appear with him in glory,* Col. iii. 4. and here, glory is said to be *a conformity unto the image of his Son;* and so tho' believers cannot now reach their copy, but do in many things offend; yet at that day, they shall be completely like him in holiness, according to their capacity; and further, shall sit with him upon his throne, Rev. iii. 21. and so be like him in glory.

XIV. No created angel or man could have challenged any right, or laid any claim unto this most excellent inheritance, nothing of this was due to them as creatures of God, nor never would they have been partakers thereof, if God had not freely, of his own good pleasure, purposed and designed this for them, and them for it: therefore he is said to have *predestinated them to be conformed unto the image of his Son.*

XV. Though believers shall partake of the glory of Christ, as adopted sons, and in this respect, have that glory given to them which the Father gave to Christ, according to John xvii. 22. that is, that they may be *with him,* and *that they may be*

hold his glory, John xvii. 24. yet as in all things Christ has the *pre-eminence,* Col. i. 18. so in this sonship, and glory following thereupon, he has a far greater share than any man or angel is capable of; so that he is *the first-born among many brethren.*

XVI. Believers sharing, in their own kind and measure, of that glory which Christ hath in heaven, doth no way lessen the glory of Christ, their head and elder brother; but so much the rather it serveth to exalt Christ, that he hath many made conform unto his image; it tendeth the more to illustrate and extol the glory of Christ, that there are some poor creatures advanced to that honour, as in some measure to look like him, and shine in glory with him: therefore it is added, *That he might be the first-born among many brethren.*

XVII. Believers, as they are all one body, of whatsoever kindred, nation and language they be, and so have a strong and near union and relation each to other, having all *one Spirit, one faith, one baptism,* Eph. iv. 4. 5. 6. and being the adopted children of one Father, Matth. vi. 9.; so whatever difference be among themselves, in respect of gifts and parts, all are alike sib to Christ, and have the same interest in, and relation to him, as their Father, and so they are brethren to his Son, that is Christ: *that he might be the first-born among many brethren.*

XVIII. Howbeit the number of the elect, in comparison of the reprobate, be but small, and so called, *a little flock,* Luke xii. 32. and *few chosen,* Matth. xx. 16. and xxii. 14. yet in themselves, absolutely considered, they are a great number, and hence called, *a world,* John iii. 16. and vi. 33. 2 Cor. v. 19. Rom. iv. 13. compared with 11. 1 John ii. 2. and *many,* Rom. v. 15. 19. so here they are called, *many brethren.*

From verse 30th OBSERVE,

I. As God, according to his own good pleasure, and counsel of his own will, hath appointed and decreed, that some shall cer-

tainly be put in possession of glory: so in the same purpose and good-pleasure of his, hath he decreed and resolved upon all the means, whereby these predestinated to glory shall be brought to the actual possession thereof; and so, in the same decree, the end and the means are so indissolvably linked together, that such as slight and condemn the means, have no warrant to expect the end, notwithstanding of God's predestination: therefore it is added, *Moreover, whom he predestinated, these he called.*

II. Albeit the Lord might have immediately glorified all such as he had predestinated to glory, had it seemed good in his eyes, who worketh all things according to the good pleasure of his will; yet it pleased him who is infinite in wisdom and counsel, so to order matters, as even these should, before they came to the possession of glory, be first bound under the power of Satan, and liable to wrath because of guilt, and so needing both calling and justification, that the glory of his mercy and justice temperate together, might the more shine forth: therefore whom he predestinated, stood also in need of being called and justified, and so he addeth, *Moreover, whom he predestinated, these he called, &c.*

III. Tho' God did love his own whom he foreknew, with an everlasting love, and accordingly did predestinate them to glory; yet this doth no way hinder but that they are by nature under the power of darkness and chains of Satan, and under the curse and wrath of God because of a broken covenant: This may well consist with the other. They may be loved of God from eternity with a love of benevolence, and yet for a time live without the fruits and effects of this, and be under legal wrath, and so standing in need of real vocation and justification; yea, predestination doth really infer the other, *viz.* vocation and justification, and so doth necessarily presuppose a state of deadness and guilt: *Whom he predestinated, these he called, &c.*

IV. Faith; whereby a poor soul heark-

eneth to the voice of the gospel, and is united to Christ, justification following thereupon, and all the gifts of grace, and perseverance in grace, so as glory shall certainly be attained, are all the fruits of election and flow therefrom; so that election cannot be for faith foreseen, nor for foreseen works of the gospel, for all are excluded, Rom. ix. 11. 12. 2. i. 9. Tit. iii. 5. and flow therefrom less than faith, Eph. i. 4. and ii. 10. Therefore he says, *Whom he did predestinate, these he called, and justified, and glorified.* See Acts xiii. 48. Tit. i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 2 Tim. ii. 19. 2 Pet. i. 20.

V. The elect, no less than the reprobate, are *by nature the children of wrath*. Eph. ii. 3. lying under God's curse and wrath, for a broken covenant, and notwithstanding of all the purpose of grace which God hath towards them, and are in such a condition, as they need to be called out of it: *Whom he predestinated, these he called.*

VI. Tho' all within the visible church be externally called, by the word preached forth by his servants, and none but saved (the mystery of the gospel being hid from many nations and people, both under the law, Psal. cxlvii. 19. 20. and under the gospel, Acts xvi. 6. 7. 10.) and many of them have some more than ordinary illumination, Heb. vi. 4. and conviction, and some change upon their outward conversation; yet the Lord doth not call all such inwardly and effectually, to a hearty and close union with Christ, and far less doth he call all men notwithstanding that he assumed flesh common to all men, for it was not upon account that any were effectually called, is his *Spirit that quickeneth*, John vi. but only these who are predestinated to eternal; and all these of whatsoever nation, language or kindred they be, without difference now under the times of the gospel, Eph. ii. 17. 1 Tim. ii. 1. 2. 4. Tit. ii. *Whom he predestinated, those he called:* that the Lord bestoweth not upon all.

pon all such as are within the visible
h, sufficient grace for conversion, for
not sufficient which doth not work
ork; altho' his outward dispensations
sufficient to render them without excuse,
3. 4. *What could have been done more
vineyard, that I have not done?*
I. Whatever excellent endowments
qualifications man at the beginning
when *created after God's own image*,
v. 24. Col. iii. 10. yet now there is
ly *darkness* upon his *understanding*,
v. 18. and v. 8. 1 Cor. i. 21. Rom. i.
d disorderliness in his affections, but
s will is perverted, his *heart* being
ul, and *desperately wicked*, Jer. xviii.
all its *imaginations evil*, Gen. vi. 5.
they are opposite to all that is good,
iii. 7. and bent to all wickedness. Job
Prov. ii. 14. Rom. vi. 17. so that they
nothing in spiritual actions without
John xv. 15. Rom. v. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 5.
they are wholly set against God. John
Palm lxxxi. 11. Luke xix. 14. Mat.
7. and hate him, Rom. i. 30. John xv.
and therefore in the act of conversion
e wholly passive, and they contribute
g thereto, yea, it is impossible they
do so, Jer. xiii. 23.: *Whom he pre-
ted, them he called*; it is not said,
he predestinated, these came in to
willingly, and of their own accord,
o' their own ability, but were called.
L. Albeit in this work of effectual
and conversion, God doth not vio-
wrest and turn the wills of men con-
o their own nature, or come upon
such an overflowing violence, sub-
and compelling it to what it is not
ble; yet he doth not work only by
suasion, and so alluring and per-
g them by proposing some desirable
therways man should be said to *make*
f to differ from another, contrary to
iv. 7. but by an immediate, inward,
rful work, Eph. i. 9. and ii. 10.
xxxvi. 26. whereby the habit of
s infused, the will really changed,

and made to turn itself toward God; yea,
the very act of believing and turning is
wonderfully produced, John vi. 66. Phil.
i. 29. and ii. 13. so as the liberty of the
will is preserved and strengthened, seeing
hereby the will is made to will freely,
John viii. 36. 2 Cor. iii. 17.; so that here-
by the will is not left in suspense, to act
or not as it pleaseth; nor doth this effect
of grace depend upon the act of our free-
will, nor is it in free-will's power to resist
and oppose the powerful and effectual o-
peration of the Spirit of God, when he is
purposing and intending to convert; but
the Lord sends forth such an unconquer-
able efficacy of grace, as always and infal-
sibly produceth its effect, when he is deal-
ing with his elect, and intending to convert
them; and powerfully changing the will,
and making it willing to run, John vi. 37.
2 Thess. i. 11. Deut. xxx. 6 Acts xvi. 14.:
Whom he predestinated, them he called, and
so called as that justification followeth.

IX. Tho' the preaching of the gospel,
and other common allowances, whereof the
reprobate do partake, flow from special
love to the elect; yet this is the first distin-
guishing grace, and the first thing where-
by election kytheth, and whereby a man is
made to read his own election, even this ef-
fectual calling, which is sometimes called a
quickenig, Eph. ii. 1. John v. 21. sometimes
a *new birth*, John iii. 5. 7. 2 Cor. v. 17.
1 Pet. i. 23. sometimes a *resurrection*, Col. ii.
12. and this is a *preventing* grace, Isa. lxxv.
1. 2. Rom. x. 20 a *stirring* grace, Eph. v.
14. and *operating*, Phil. ii. 13. Eph. i. 11.:
Whom he predestinated, them he called. See
1 Cor. i. 26. 27. 28.

X. Notwithstanding of this eternal and
unchangeable love of God to his elect,
yet this being his purpose, and a pure act
of his will, which is immanent and eternal,
and so produceth no outward effect or
change in the creature, concerning whom
it is immediately, the creature is not ex-
empted from that condition of being liable
to wrath because of sin, and of needing
justification,

justification, seeing notwithstanding hereof they are no less guilty than the reprobate, Rom. iii. 9. 10. 19. and obnoxious to wrath, Eph. ii. 3. bondage under Satan, Heb. ii. 14. are under the curse, Gal. iii. 13. and so standing in need of justification: *Whom he called, them he justified.*

XI. Predestination, or election, is so far from justling out justification in and thro' Christ's merits, that it is the ground and root thereof; so that none else are justified but such as are predestinated, and all such shall be justified in God's own time; and the fountain cause of all is his predestinating love; *Whom he predestinated,--them he justified.*

XII. Whatever purposes or thoughts of good the Lord hath towards his own chosen ones from eternity, yet are they not then actually justified; nor from the time that the Lord Jesus Christ made a perfect and complete satisfaction, nor before they be actually united unto Jesus Christ in their effectual calling, and so joined to him by faith; for before they are justified they are effectually called: *Whom he called, them he justified.*

XIII. There are none who have truly fled in to Christ, and are united to him by faith, but however their sins stare them in the face, and they are ready to look upon themselves as unjustified, and are liable to God's curse and vengeance; yet they are really justified before God, and all their iniquities are actually pardoned in and thro' the merits of Christ; for, *whom he called, them he justified.*

XIV. There are none that can bring forth the fruits of holiness, until first they be united unto Christ their head and root; the tree must be good before it can bring forth good fruit, and *without faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. xi. 1. and *without Christ we can do nothing*, John xv. 5. for before any are initially glorified, or sanctified, they must be effectually called: *Whom he called,--them he glorified.*

XV. Whatever carnal men, wedded to

their lusts, think of holiness and strict walking, as an exercise below them, yet it is truly glorious and excellent, being the renewed *image of God*, Eph. iv. 23. 24. and the *divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. yea, it is glory begun and in the bud, and so called *glory*; 2 Cor. iii. 18.: *Whom he justified, these he glorified*; that is, sanctified, and inchoated glory in them.

XVI. There is no entering into the full possession of glory, until a soul be first reconciled to God, and absolved from all his guilt, (for justice must first be satisfied) and sanctified by the Spirit of God thro' the whole man, seeing nothing *entereth into the new Jerusalem, which defileth*, Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 14. and *without holiness no man shall see God*, Heb. xii. 14.; for it is these who are justified that he glorifieth; *Whom he justified, them he glorified.*

XVII. However such as are effectually called, and justified by faith, may fall into conscience-wounding sins, Psalm xxxii. 3. 4. and grievous scandals, 2 Sam. xii. 14. and thereby provoke God, 2 Sam. xi. 27. and wrong themselves, Psalm li. 8. 10. 12. Rev ii. 4; yet there being sure promises made by God of their perseverance, Jer. xxxi. 33. 34. Matth. xvi. 18. John xiv. 16. iv. 14. v. 25. and vi. 37. 39. 44. 57. Psalm cxxv. 1. and God actually protecting them, 1 Cor. i. 8. 9. and x. 13. 1 Thess. v. 23. Phil. i. 6. and Christ praying for them, John xvii. 15. 20. compared with John xi. 41. 42. and preserving them, John vi. 27. 39. and xvii. 22. Eph. v. 23. Jude 1. 2 Tim. i. 12. and they being sealed by the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor. i. 21. Eph. i. 13. 14. and iv. 30. cannot totally and finally fall from that state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved; for *whom he justified, them he glorified*. See Phil. i. 6. 1 Pet. i. 5. 9. 2 Pet. i. 10. John x. 28. 29. 1 John iii. 9.

XVIII. Amongst other grounds of this rare and excellent benefit of perseverance to the end, the eternal act of predestination is one; so that it doth not depend up-

on man's free-will, but upon the immutability of this decree, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God; therefore predestination is the root of all, *And whom he predestinated,---these be glorified.* See Jer. xxxi. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 18. 19.

VERSE 31. *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

IN this verse there is a sixth motive set down, to press them to a christian deportment under afflictions, which the apostle bringeth in as following upon, and flowing from that excellent and perfect plot of salvation, mentioned before; and thus by his own example he teacheth them how, from that noble and wonderful device, they may gather ground of holy triumphing over all difficulties; and as a noble leader courageously and valiantly breaks through the throng of adversaries, yea, and, to speak so, casts the glove to, challenging and daring them, with a holy exclamation, being filled with christian valour and fortitude; and thus by expressing his christian boldness and magnanimity, holdeth forth, how couragious and magnanimous all Christians ought to be, in encountering with afflictions, and difficulties of all kinds, and so breaks out, saying, *What shall we say then to these things?---who can be against us?* Not as if they would meet with no opposition; or there were none to breed them any trouble or molestation; but these are the expressions of a magnanimous Christian, undervaluing and contemning all adversaries, as not to be feared or regarded, accounting all their enemies as no considerable body: and so it is as if he had said, What can they do who are against us, be it the devil or the world, or whatever it be, they can effectuate nothing to our prejudice. And what is the ground of all this? It is in these words, *If God be for us*; not as if he were doubting of this, but it is as if

he had said, *seeing God is for us*: God's being propitious and favourable unto believers, is a prop to support them in adversity, and is that which maketh them as a brazen wall unconquerable, and as an immoveable rock against all the waves and blasts of persecution or distress. So then the argument lieth thus: It becometh such who are in favour with God, and are under his protection and tuition, who ruleth heaven and earth, to be valiant and courageous in all distresses and dangers, and with an undaunted courage to withstand the worst of difficulties: But so it is that God is with us, favouring and protecting us; therefore we should not faint in adversity, but stoutly and gallantly go thro' all adversity whatsoever.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Christians may have excellent grounds of encouragement for a time of adversity at hand, and yet be in hazard of fainting thro' despondency of spirit, thro' being strangers unto, and ignorant of the right way of improving these grounds for animating and heartening of themselves; therefore the apostle must here teach them, what strength and encouragement to gather from that excellent ground laid down before, and say, *What shall we say then to these things?*

II. The noble plot and excellent design and contrivance of the salvation of poor worms, and of the way how certainly it is brought about, to the glory of the riches of the wisdom and mercy of God, is so comfortable a ground of encouragement, that were it well improved by such as knew of their interest in that grand device, it might so animate and embolden them, that they might triumph over all adversity, as the apostle doth here, saying, *What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

III. It becometh the ministers of the gospel, by their gallant and magnanimous carriage in adversity and affliction, as triumphing

umphing over all opposition, to hearten the people of God to a christian and undaunted-like carriage, when meeting with tribulation; and it will much animate and revive the spirits of poor Christians, who are succumbing and fainting in adversity, to see others valiantly and courageously standing out the storm and day of battle: therefore doth the apostle go before them in these triumphing expressions; *What shall we say?—If God be for us, who can be against us?* and so puts himself in among the rest.

IV. Tho' God, for his own holy ends, be oftentimes countenancing the wicked, and granting them external prosperity, and victory of their enemies, yea, and sometimes in his infinitely wise dispensation and providence, is so ordering things, as they are victorious even over his own children; yet God is not with them, as favouring their doings, nor is he dispensing so towards them out of love; but it is only such as he, according to his eternal purpose and decree, hath in due time called and justified, that hath his heart and fatherly love, and with these he is at all times, and in all cases and conditions; he is always propitious and favourable to them, and they are still under his fatherly care and protection: therefore says he, *If* (or seeing) *God be for us.*

V. This fatherly care and protection which the Lord hath over his own, doth not so far guard them as that they shall never see trouble, nor hear of enemies, but notwithstanding of all this love and respect which God hath towards them, so long as there is any of the seed of the serpent remaining, they shall undoubtedly meet with enmity and opposition, Gen. iii. 15. they will still have some against them, the devil, the world, professed enemies, and false friends: *Who can be against us?*

VI. God's love and fatherly care and tuition, tho' it will not keep his own from being assaulted, yet it will so blunt the edge of the sword of persecutors, and so

weaken the power of the storm of persecution, as that, come what can come, they shall be safe from destruction, and shall not be blown to the bottom of the sea: Isa. xliii. 2. Dan. iii. 27. and vi. 22. *If God be for us, who can be against us?* See Psalm cxxiv. 1.

VII. Whatever carnal grounds the wicked may go upon, to gather strength and courage to themselves in a day of adversity; yet the children of God only desire to shelter themselves in a storm, under the lee side of the Rock of Ages; God's favour and good-will is only their refuge in a day of adversity, and there only they desire to be secured and kept safe; it is this that keeps up their hearts in a day of trouble, that their trouble doth not banish them out of God's favour; that which maketh Paul cry out, *Who can be against us?* is this, *God is for us.*

VIII. The serious consideration and belief of God's special care of, and favour towards believers, is enough to put life, vigour, courage, and boldness in them, even in a hard time, and is able to harden them against the saddest of afflictions, and to make them resolutely, as becometh courageous Christians, ride out a storm, and triumph: and the want of this, or when believers begin to question, and, through the force of temptation, are made to suspect God's love and fatherly care, as if he would no more interest himself in their quarrel, makes them many a time droop, and walk under afflictions fainting and discouraging-like; therefore says Paul, *If God be for us, who can be against us?* See Psalm xxiii. 4. and iii. 7. and cxviii. 6.

VERSE 32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

BECAUSE that believers would be oftentimes in the lark, and put to question their room in God's affection, therefore,

fore, for the further confirmation and clearing of the fore-mentioned motive, he mentioneth that which will be a standing monument to all generations, of God's unparallelable love, and most tender respect, toward them, *viz.* his giving Christ to the death for them; and this is set out with a great emphasis, the more to illustrate it: And, 1. he says, *He spared not*; by no means would he forbear to have justice satisfied by him: And, 2. *his Son*: When men would quite with any thing, how dear soever it be, for their children's sake, yet he was content to quite with his Son. 3. *His own Son*; that is, his only begotten Son, not a begotten son, but his own and only begotten Son, even him he would not spare; 4. *But delivered him up to the death*; from eternity did fore-ordain that he should lay down his life, and in due time sent him into the world for that end, and delivered him not only to scourgings, want, and other hardships, but even to death itself, suffering Judas and others, to put him to death. Then, 5. says he, *for us*; for us poor, sinful, feckless, unworthy wretches, who could deserve nothing at his hand, and from whom nothing could be expected. And, 6. *for us all*; that is, not for all and every individual man and woman in the world, for to say so, were to cross the apostle's scope, which, as we shall hear, is to hold forth this as a notable ground of confidence, that they shall want nothing that is for their behoof, *viz.* that he has given Christ for them, and given him to the death for their use; now, had he given Christ to death equally for the reprobate and elect ones, how could it be any ground of encouragement to the one, to fear no danger in adversities? That which is common to many, cannot be proper to a few; and if the reprobate wicked ones might say, that Christ was given for them, how could the elect godly ones draw this comfortable conclusion from it, that they should get all things? might not the wicked, with

the like liberty draw the same conclusion therefrom for their comfort? But, moreover, we say, that Christ and all things here mentioned go together, and to whom the one is given, the other is granted also; now, sure I am, none will say, that these *all things* here mentioned are given to the reprobate and wicked ones, otherwise the apostle's argument should be made null, and his motive should indeed be no motive: therefore neither is Christ given to death for them: But this *all* is for all these he has been speaking of before, who are predestinated to life, and whom the Lord hath called, or purposed to call, justify, and glorify, amongst whom the apostle reckons himself, saying, *us all*; Now, says he, he has given him *for us all*, and not for a few of us, who are more eminent in holiness than the rest; not for a few in one nation, but the good of this gift redounds to all ranks, qualities, and nations. And having thus emphatically set forth this rare and admirable gift, he thence gathereth a seventh motive, yet further to press cheerfulness in afflictions; and it is an argument drawn from the more to the less: as if he had said, I know one thing amongst many, which troubleth you in a time of distress, is, fear of want and of pinching: now why do you fear that; *He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* He that has given you the more, will he not give you the less also? What are all these things to the gift you have gotten already? nothing in comparison with that; and therefore the consideration of this should arm you against all these fears.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Jesus Christ is true God equal with the Father, having the same essence; for he is here called *his Son*, yea, *his own Son*; not only because, that among all the sons of God he was the chief, and the best beloved, but also because he has the same

divine essence, with all the essential attributes, as, *eternity*, John viii. 5. Col. i. 17. Prov. viii. 22. 24. Micah v. 2. *omnipresence*, Matth. xviii. 20. and xxviii. 20. John iii. 13. *omniscience*, John ii. 24. and xxi. 17. *omnipotence*, John x. 29. Phil. iii. 21. and *immutability*, Heb. i. 12. and xiii. 8. and hence we find him getting divine titles, Isa. ix. 6. Rom. ix. 5. and divine worship, Acts vii. 59. and ix. 14. Heb. i. 6. Rev. v. 12. John xiv. 1. and v. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 19. and working divine works, John i. 3. v. 21. and vi. 40. Col. i. 16. 17. Heb. i. 3.: *His own Son*.

II. Tho' Christ Jesus hath the self-same individual essence with the Father, yet is he a distinct person from the Father; and so tho' there be but one essence, yet are there more persons than one in the God-head; for he is called *his Son*, and so a person distinct from him.

III. Christ Jesus, as God, was not begotten of the Father as bodies are begotten, nor by any efflux, or partition of the divine essence, which is the same in both, but by an internal and personal action of the Father, whereby, from eternity, he begat, from himself, in the same essence, his Son, as his own image, and so did communicate to him the same whole divine essence; hence he is said to be *begotten*, Psalm ii. 7. and *the only begotten of the Father*, John i. 14. *the image of the invisible God*, Col. i. 15. and *the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3.; and here he is called *his own Son*, as being his natural Son, naturally begotten, and not adopted as believers are.

IV. Jesus Christ, tho' the eternal Son of God; equal with the Father in power and glory, Phil. ii. 6. did take upon him man's nature, by taking a true body, being conceived in the womb of the Virgin, and a reasonable soul; for he is said to be *delivered unto death*, and so behaved to be man, for God cannot die: See John i. 14. Phil. ii. 7.

V. The Lord having made a law, and made death the penalty of a broken covenant, there was a necessity upon that account, that ere justice should be satisfied, man, or his cautioner, should die; and man not being able to satisfy justice and escape death, the Lord appointed his cautioner Christ to die; and thus he is said to be *delivered to death*; no less than this could satisfy, one drop of blood, one tear, or sigh, would not do the turn.

VI. Jesus Christ standing in our room as cautioner, making satisfaction to justice for us, did not only undergo the miseries of this life, as, *reproach*, Isa. liii. 3. *shame*, Matth. xxvii. 29. Mark xv. 20. Luke xviii. 32. xxii. 63. and xxiii. 11. 36. *hunger*, Matth. iv. 2. Mark xi. 12. *thirst*, John iv. 7. *weariness*, John iv. 6. and the like, but was also betrayed, taken captive, imprisoned, condemned, and executed, and died the shameful and painful death of the cross: *He was delivered to death*.

VII. Christ Jesus did not thus die by mere chance, or any fatal necessity, but according to the counsel and determination of God, Acts iv. 28. notwithstanding whereof Christ did willingly, without any constraint or coercion flowing therefrom, lay down his life, John x. 18. and xiv. 30. and his executioners did also most willingly, yea, and chearfully, act their part; therefore it is said, that *God delivered him to death*.

VIII. As the Lord did from all eternity decree whatsoever cometh to pass, according to *the counsel of his own will*, Eph. i. 11. so in particular hath he decreed that sin shall be in the world by his permission, and yet he cannot be the author of sin, James i. 13. whereof there can be no cause, but a deficient, sin being *the transgression of a law*, or the want of conformity thereto, 1 John iii. 4. yea, he hath a holy hand about the self-same individual actions which sinful men are committing, and is thereby executing his own decrees, by his actual

and efficacious providence; therefore it is said, *he delivered him to death*. See John iii. 16. Zech. xiii. 7. Matth. xxvi. 31.

IX. Jesus Christ, as he took the nature of man upon him, only for the good of mankind, and was *in all things like us, except sin*, Heb. iv. 15.; so in every part of his office, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation, he eyed the good of his own, and did and suffered all for their cause; therefore it is said, *he was delivered for us all*.

X. Christ Jesus's death was so fully and completely satisfactory to justice, in the behalf of such for whom he willingly offered up himself, that such certainly should get good of him, and be actually delivered from the curse under which they did ly; and so he did not die, that all, or none at all, might, if so it had pleased them, get good of him, but he died as representing them, and acting in their stead for whom he died, as an advocate acts for his client; therefore it is said, *he was delivered for us all*. See 2 Cor. v. 15. John vi. 51. x. 11. xi. 50. and xv. 13.

XI. Christ laid not down his life a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God for all and every man, but only for such as were given to him from eternity, being predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, and whom God purposed to call and justify in due time, and at length to glorify: *He delivered him to death for us*.

XII. The death of Christ, he being the Son of God, was able to satisfy justice for many a condemned wretch; and tho' the elect be of different conditions, tho' all alike plunged in original guilt, yet not alike guilty of actual transgressions; yet Christ is a common person for them all, and laid down his life alike for all, and not for one more than for another: *He was delivered for us all*.

XIII. Tho' man was the law-breaker, and thereby liable to destruction, and bound to think upon a way how justice

should be satisfied; yet the way of redemption never bred in his breast; it was never his plot or device, but the invention of God who was the party offended; it was he and he only who found out the remedy; therefore it is said, *He spared not his own Son, but delivered him to death for us all*.

XIV. Amongst many other temptations which even the elect of God, for whom Christ died, are assaulted with, and in hazard of being overthrown by, fear of want in a world, especially in a time of persecution, and affliction, is one; this is the evil against which he is comforting them here, saying, *How shall he not with him freely give us all things?*

XV. Such as have fled in to Christ, and have an interest in him, are in such a condition, as they shall want nothing that is good for them, be their straits and necessities what they will, although they be often complaining and crying out, that they want this and the other thing: As they have a right to, so shall they actually enjoy every thing which is really for their good: *How shall he not with him freely give us all things?* See 1 Cor. iii. 22. 23. Psalm xxxiv. 10.

XVI. The ground of the right which Christians have to any thing in a world, and of their actual possession of any good thing which they enjoy, is not in themselves, or in any thing they have or can do, but all they get is in and through Christ Jesus, he is the ground of their charter; therefore it is said, *How shall he not with him freely give us all things?*

XVII. Whatever external favours even believers receive of God, there is nothing in them meriting or procuring the same, but all are free gifts of God, flowing from grace and free love in God; and when we rightly take up ourselves, and the particular favours we receive, we will be forced to acknowledge free grace to be their original and fountain: *How shall he not --- freely give us all things?*

XVIII. Howbeit believers be often

doubting of receiving any particular which they stand in need of, when they meet with a strait, especially when they consider how just and righteous a God they have to do with; how sinful and unworthy they themselves are, and how great the mercy is which they desire; yet the consideration of the matchlessness of the love and free grace, which eminently and wonderfully shine forth in his sending (who was the party offended) and not sparing his Son, and his own Son, but delivered to death, (the greatest and most unparallelable gift, and the fruit of the strangest love, that ever was heard of,) and that for us, who were most unworthy, deserving death and destruction; may abundantly loose all the doubts and scruples of believers about their wants here-away, and sufficiently confirm their faith as to these things; yea, it is a shame for such as do not question their interest in Christ, and dare not deny but they have received that great gift of love, to doubt of God's bestowing of those lesser favours upon them, as their necessity calleth for: This is his argument, *He that spared not his own Son, but gave him for us all to death, how shall he not with him give us all things also?*

VERSES 33. 34. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth:*

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

IN a time of affliction believers are ordinarily assaulted by Satan, the *accuser of the brethren*, as he is called, Rev. xii. 10. and by their own consciences, with guilt, as provoking God to send such and such sharp afflictions upon them, and hereby would have them concluding themselves gone and condemned; and this keeps them from a rejoicing heartsome way of bearing the cross, makes them walk under sad

dispensations, drooping and fainting-like, and not with that christian courage and magnanimity which becometh; and therefore to remove this out of their way, the apostle goes on triumphing, the more to encourage and animate fainting believers, and valiantly and courageously steps out again, and challengeth any, be what they will, the devil, the world, or conscience, to see if they can make their putt good, in challenging poor believers; and so he gives a double challenge to the same purpose, saying, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* that is, who dare give in any bill of complaint against them? who dare put in any accusation, or enter a plea, or suit of law against them, before a court? The next is, *Who shall condemn?* What judge dare pass any sentence in their prejudice? Now, in these challenges there are negative answers contained, thus: None shall indict a bill against them, none dare condemn them; or if they do, it shall be in vain, and to no purpose. And therefore shows the grounds, why he is, and would have all believers, so stout as not to fear any accusation, or condemnation; and the first is couched in that word, *God's elect*: Such as do now believe in him, and are effectually called out of the world, and separated by grace from the rest, were from all eternity chosen of God, and separated, in his wonderful love; they were chosen to life before the foundation of the world was laid, and what can any enemy do to them? They are the elect and chosen jewels of God, and is any able to pluck them out of his hand? 2. *It is God who justifieth*: They are assailed at the highest court of justice; he that is Justice-general, and the supreme Judge, from whom there is no appeal, hath decreed in their favours; he hath acquitted them from all that was or could be laid to their charge, and who then dare now presume to table a new plea against them? who can think to get a reduction of the former decreet, and get a sentence past against them?

3. Not only doth he thus shew, that believers are absolved before the highest court of justice, but for the greater encouragement of believers, and the further strengthening of their faith, he sets down the grounds of the absolution, and how the sentence is according to justice and equity, and so they need fear the less any reduction; for, (1.) says he, *Christ died*; Christ as our head and cautioner paid the whole sum, and the penalty of the bond, and so as our cautioner laid down his life for satisfaction to justice. (2.) Not only so, but also, *Christ is risen again*; and this should further confirm believers of their absolution, and prove encouragement and strength unto their faith; for he brings it in with a *yea rather*; and so his resurrection says, that justice is indeed satisfied, and that the bond is cancelled; he being a public person acting in our stead, his coming out of prison with the bond cancelled, was virtually our absolution and justification. (3.) He says, *Who is even at the right hand of God*; kindly welcomed of the Father, as one that had fully finished the employment he was sent about, and hath gotten the sovereignty of power and authority, having *all things put under his feet*, Eph. i. 20. 22. and so is enabled to fulfil all his own will; and be executor of his own testament, John xvii. 2. and there he sits as a common person, entering thither as our attorney, Heb. i. 3. 4. 5. Eph. i. 21. 22. preparing a place for us, John xiv. 2. 3. so that he being our head, in a manner, we are sitting there with him, Eph. ii. 6. Rev. iii. 21. Luke xxii. 30. And then, (4.) *Who maketh intercession for us*; we need not fear condemnation, seeing Christ our cautioner is up at court, to put, as it were, God in mind of the satisfaction made, and so interceed and use moyen for new outbreakings, pleading and advocating our cause against all accusations whatsoever, 1 John ii. 11.

And thus, as he layeth down solid grounds upon which faith might triumph, so here-

by he giveth an eighth motive to stir up believers to a patient and christian deportment under afflictions, thus; Such as have ground whereupon to triumph and answer all objections, from whatsoever hand they come, need not faint in a day of adversity, tho' then they should be much assaulted with temptations, guilt, and accusations: But so it is that believers, being the elect of God, have solid grounds whereupon to answer all accusations and challenges, and wherewith to stop the mouths of all accusers; as that God has justified them, Christ having died for them, risen in their stead, ascended up into heaven, and sitten down at the Father's right hand, and is daily as our high-priest making intercession for them; Therefore such may have courage in every distress.

From verse 33. OBSERVE,

I. Tho' believers be justified and absolved before God, having all their iniquities pardoned through faith in Christ; yet will not this excecme them from challenges and accusations from Satan, the world, and a misinformed conscience, but they may resolve to meet with insults from these their spiritual enemies; as here the apostle intimateth, when he is laying down grounds of encouragement against these, saying, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

II. As always Satan, who daily goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and the rest of our spiritual enemies, are waiting for an opportunity to overturn our hopes, and undermine our grounds of comfort; so especially, in the time when we are wrestling with outward affliction, and our back is at the wall, Satan sets on, and musters up our iniquities against us, and indicts a libel to brangle our faith, and shake our confidence, which should make believers more careful to strengthen that part of the wall, at that time, and to fortify themselves against any such temptations: therefore, when the apostle

apostle is encouraging them against afflictions, he in a special manner laboureth to strengthen them on this hand, and says, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*

III. When guilt is armed against a poor soul, and thereby he finds himself in hazard of condemnation, he cannot choose but faint and be discouraged in the day of adversity; for which cause believers had need to keep their interest in Christ and pardon clear, in a time of trial and adversity: therefore the apostle sets himself against this, to prevent their fainting, and says, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

IV. Believers, by perceiving the grace of God in themselves, and how God has efficaciously picked them out from among the rest of the sinful race of man, may win to know that they were chosen of God from all eternity, and belong to his election of grace: for to fortify them against all accusations, and to persuade them, that how many, and how grievous accusations and crimes soever their adversaries shall table against them, they shall certainly be born out and overcome, and their enemies shall shoot short, he tells them, that they are elected; which would be no ground of comfort, if it were altogether impossible to be known that they were so: therefore he adds, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*

V. However our spiritual enemies be still drawing up bills of indictment against us, who have fled in to Christ by faith; yet there is *no weapon formed against Israel which shall prosper*; his question containeth a negation in the bosom of it: so that albeit temptations of this nature may cause many believers question their estate for a long time, and be ready to pass a sentence against themselves as utterly lost and condemned; yet their accusers shall never so far prevail, as to get them indeed condemned, whatever they may be in their

own estimation: *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*

VI. That whereby believers are kept, when Satan is assaulting them with accusations, so that he doth not overcome, is not any thing in themselves; but all their stock of strength lieth out of themselves, in the free love of God, and thither must all believers betake themselves for shelter: therefore says he, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* His election is made use of as a ground of encouragement to their faith in that day.

VII. Tho' believers may be long in the dark, and not know that they are justified; even tho' they have really fled in to Christ, it may be a long time before their own consciences absolve them; yet are all such as have really fled in to Christ by faith, justified and absolved before the highest tribunal; even God, who is the Lord, Lawgiver, and Judge, who only is able to pardon offences, Isa. xliii. 25. Luke xi. 21. he it is that passeth the sentence of absolution, Rom. iii. 30. Gal. iii. 8. they are absolved before the highest court: *It is God that justifieth*; so that they are justified in the court of heaven.

VIII. Justification is such a real act of God, whereby he pronounceth us as righteous, pardoning our transgressions, and freeing us from the curse due to us for sin, so as we are accepted as righteous, and is not an infusing of righteousness in us: for here it is opposed to accusation and condemnation, so that it is a freeing of us from the charge and accusation of sin, and from condemnation due therefore; *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?*

IX. Believers being absolved at the highest court of justice, need not much be vexed, whatever Satan, or a misinformed conscience, can charge them with, seeing they are not able to rescind the acts of the court of heaven; and the right considera-

tion of this, that they are absolved there, will comfort them against all accusations; and their not being acquainted herewith makes them so ready to comply, and strike in with their accusers, to their own prejudice: for this is his reason, why no accusation can hurt them, *It is God that justifieth.*

From Verse 34th OBSERVE,

I. Not only are believers in hazard of having guilt charged home upon them, and particular transgressions laid to their charge by the accuser of the brethren, but also to have a sentence drawn out against them by Satan and their own conscience; and this is the butt Satan levels at, and for which cause he musters up their iniquities before them: therefore says he, *Who shall condemn?*

II. Albeit our justification be an act of God's free grace, and no way merited by us, either in whole or in part; yet the Lord being just and true, standing to the law, Gen. ii. 17. there could be *no remission without shedding of blood*, Heb. ix. 22. and a valuable price behoved to be paid, and this is only Christ's death, which is our redemption, and the meritorious cause of our justification: therefore it is added as a ground of our justification, *It is Christ that died.*

III. Seeing Christ's death was such a valuable and worthy price, as satisfied God himself, for all the sins of all the elect, which the Lord made to meet on him, Isa. liii. 6. and is therefore called a *price*, or *ransom*, Matth. xx. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 6. *yea, plenteous redemption*, Psal. cxxx. 7. and thus the grace of our Lord is said to have been *exceeding abundant*, (or redundant, more than enough, as the word importeth) 1 Tim. i. 14. the consideration thereof may abundantly stay and settle a soul shaken by Satan's accusations, and charging them with many iniquities mustered up with many aggravations; and sure, when faith vieweth Christ in his death, as

being a redemption full and perfect, answering to all its guilt and sinfulness completely and abundantly, it will not be so soon put to a non-plus; When Satan and a deceitful heart tables accusations against the poor soul, this is one of the triumphing grounds, *It is Christ that died.*

IV. Christ Jesus did truly and really lay down his life, and there was a real separation of his soul and body, so that it was no fiction: for to verify that he died truly, it is said, that *he rose again.*

V. Christ's body lying in the grave for a time, where it could see no corruption, Psal. xvi. 10. was really raised out of the grave, and really and naturally joined to his soul; yet so as he lost not the essence, nor the essential properties of the human nature, only he was free of these infirmities, which a natural body, as natural, is subject unto, his body being then spiritual, 1 Cor. xv. 41. and which he subjected himself unto, in a peculiar manner, as our cautioner; *Yea, rather that is risen again.* See Luke xxiv. 39.

VI. As Christ did of his own accord, willingly lay down his life, John x. 18. so also by his own power, being God equal with the Father in power; he raised himself from the death: for it is said, *Yea rather, that is risen again.* See Rom. i. 4. John ii. 19.

VII. As Christ's resurrection is a clear evidence that God himself is satisfied, and has discharged the debt; Christ being our surety, Heb. vii. 22. undertaking to pay our debt, was arrested and cast into prison, Isa. liii. 8. and so could not win out of prison upon any terms, till satisfaction was had; so hence also believers may be persuaded that their justification is sure before God, he being a common person in all that he did or suffered as Mediator, and his justification, and absolution from the debt he lay under, being virtually theirs: therefore he addeth, as another ground of justification, *Yea rather, that is risen again.*

VIII. Christ's resurrection being his coming

coming out of prison, as having fulfilled the bond he was lying under, as our cautioner, and receiving an acquittance at the hand of God the pursuer, and that for all our transgressions, if it were well viewed and seriously considered, would abundantly keep a believer from staggering, in a storm of accusations, and at the fear of condemnation: for this is given as another ground of triumph, *Yea rather, that is risen again.*

IX. Tho' the death of Christ rightly taken up, may abundantly fortify a soul against all accusations of Satan; yet there is more ground of triumph in his resurrection, this being a solemn discharge from all sin and condemnation, payment being made in his death, there is a subscribed discharge had in his resurrection, so as now a believer hath no cause to fear damnation, let Satan multiply accusations as he can; which should cause believers study well the right way of making use of his resurrection: therefore says he, *Yea rather, that is risen again.*

X. Christ Jesus as our Mediator, was advanced to great glory and dominion, having great power and majesty, and great authority, having all things under his power, Eph. i. 22. &c. Matth. xxviii. 18. and so as being governor, he ruleth all things, in and for his church, having a name above every name, Phil. ii. 9. 10. 11. and has all things under his subjection, Heb. ii. 7. 8. for he is here said to sit *at the right hand of God*, and this right hand is called, *a right hand of the majesty on high*, Heb. i. 3. and *the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens*, Heb. viii. 1. so it is called, *the right hand of the throne of God*, Heb. xii. 2. See Psal. cx. 1. 1-Cor. xv. 25.

XI. The consideration of Christ's being welcomed of the Father, as one that had fully executed his commission, and done that which the priests which stood daily, could not do, Heb. x. 11. 12, and as one with whom he is well-pleased, for the sa-

crifice he offered, and so well-pleased as to set him down on his right hand, (a great token of honour, 1 Kings ii. 19. Psal. xlv. 9. Matth. xx. 21. and which was not granted to angels, Heb. i. 13.) and as one who entered heaven for our good, John xiv. 2. yea, and in our names, he being our *forerunner*, Heb. vi. 20. and hence our place is sure, Heb. xii. 23. 1 Pet. i. 5. and set down at the Father's right hand, as having power to right his own children, and give them what is purchased for them, and what he left them in his testament, John xvii. 2. and to destroy his enemies, and the enemies of his church, Psal. cx. 1. yea, and sat down as our head, may abundantly ascertain believers of their being free from condemnation, however they be exercised with particular accusations: for to strengthen them the more against these onsets, he adds, (as it were *ex superabundanti*) *and is even at the right hand of God.*

XII. As under the law, the high-priest, and he alone, did enter into the holy of holies, with the blood of the sacrifice which he had killed without, Lev. xvi. 11. 14. 15. 16. 17. all which were *patterns of things* heavenly, Heb. ix. 23. so Christ Jesus, who is called *a great high-priest*, Heb. iv. 14. after he had offered himself a sacrifice to the death, Heb. ix. 26. carried his blood into the holy of holies, Heb. ix. 12. and there appears, Heb. ix. 24. sends up a cloud of incense, Rev. viii. 3. &c. yea, without this act of his priest-hood, he had not been a complete priest, but had left his office imperfect, Heb. viii. 4. and thus he was *a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck*, Psal. cx. 4. therefore it is said, *who also maketh intercession for us.*

XIII. Tho' Christ be now exalted to great honour and dignity, being set down as our Head and Mediator at the right hand of God, and so crowned with unspeakable glory and majesty, power and dominion; yet doth he not forget his poor brethren in the body, but even there
afts

acts the part of a priest and intercessor for them, having still a tender and kindly sympathy with, and brotherly love to them; as he sits at the right hand of God as King, so doth he enter, and sit down as priest: for it is said, *Who also* (even at the right hand of God) *maketh intercession for us.*

XIV. Christ's intercession doth no way infringe his oblation, as if it had not been perfect, nor accepted of God, as satisfaction complete for the sins of the elect; for notwithstanding hereof, his *one offering* is said to *perfect us for ever*, Heb. x. 14. and thereby he *obtained an eternal redemption*, Heb. ix. 12. and thus being made perfect by suffering, he became the author of eternal salvation, Heb. v. 8. 9. So then these two parts of his office do no way juttle: in his death he paid the whole sum, and the oblation was then as perfect as could be, and yet there was another action remaining, viz. his intercession; for albeit he died and rose again, in sign and token that justice was satisfied, and was set down at the right hand of God, in sign and token that the Father was well pleased with him; yet moreover, he is said; *to make intercession.*

XV. Tho' Christ's death was a full and complete price, wanting nothing for the utmost satisfaction of justice; yet it was necessary, that he should moreover agent and advocate our cause at the bar of God, that so he might be *a priest for ever, having an unchangeable priest-hood*, Heb. vii. 21. 24. 25. he might have work. and be at work still, seeing he was consecrated for ever, Heb. vii. 28. and so he might apply the purchased redemption, or be the author or applying cause of eternal salvation, as *a priest after the order of Melchisedek*, Heb. v. 9. 10. that the whole glory of the whole work of our salvation, first and last, might be his, to whom alone it is due, and that God's mercy and free grace might shine forth in our salvation thus by his intercession, as justice appeared in his satisfaction; so that all his priest-

hood would have been ineffectual, if he had not thus fulfilled his office: therefore, as the cop-stone of all, this is added, with an *also*, when he says, *Who also maketh intercession for us.*

XVI. As the elect of God stood in need of this intercession, for their first justification by faith, and being sprinkled with blood, (which Christ now doth while in heaven, Heb. xii. 24. seeing it is added, *which speaketh better things*; see 1 Pet. i. 2.) so even after they are justified, they stand in need still of his intercession; as for the continuation of their justification and every fresh act of it, so for every pardon of particular iniquities committed after; yea, this seems to be the great end of his intercession, 1 John ii. 1. 2. or to be eminently the work of it; not that his death was not the procuring cause of the pardon of those sins; and thus he *saves to the uttermost*, even by *making intercession*, Heb. vii. 25. Believers are, and still will be standing in need of Christ's working in his offices: for says he, *he maketh intercession for us*, even us believers.

XVII. As believers will stand in need always of Christ's work in the execution of his priestly office, having many accusations given in against them, which he only must answer, daily failings which call for his help, and prayers and other duties to perform, which he must perfume with his incense, Rev. viii. 3. 4. for *by him we come to God*, Heb. vii. 25. and *offer sacrifice*, Heb. xiii. 15.; so he is daily about his office, and his work lieth on his hand for ever, and so he is *a priest for ever*, Psal. cx. 4. Heb. v. 6. and vii. 16. 17. and has a standing office as our *advocate*, 1 John ii. 1. and is an agent and solicitor for us, Heb. ix. 24.: so it is said, *who maketh intercession*, as being his constant employment, and the work he is still about,

XVIII. Christ Jesus doth not now interceed with strong cries and tears, as in his estate of humiliation; but having a sympathy, and a native sensible feeling of

our infirmities, Heb. ii. 17. 18. and iv. 15. a sympathy which is sinless and perfect, and is awakened by his union with his members; he has, as it were, a natural inclination to have these evils redressed; and for this cause he appeareth in our nature, in the merit of his sacrifice, Heb. ix. 12. 14. and thereby speaketh his purpose to have our evils remedied, and declareth his willingness to have all made out which was promised, and that with a holy and reverent adoration, suitable to him as Mediator now glorified; being yet, as head of the body and Mediator, inferior to the Father, and therefore he is said to *pray the Father*, John xiv. 16. and xvi. 26. and thus he is expecting to have *his enemies made his foot-stool*, Heb. x. 13.: *Who maketh intercession.*

XIX. As the consideration of Christ's intercession may abundantly confirm the faith of believers touching the certainty of their salvation, seeing it is his work to save to the uttermost, completely and fully, Heb. xii. 25. and not by halves nor upon supposition, and thus his honour is engaged, as being surety, even to bring those he died for to salvation; so may the consideration of it corroborate and confirm us against all accusations and fears, from whatever airth they come, seeing he is *a great high priest*, Heb. iv. 14. 16. so great with God that he cannot but prevail, being his natural son, Heb. iv. 14. vii. 25. with 28. and so God as well as man, and a son for ever, Heb. vii. 28. and one with himself, and dearly beloved, and so can deny him nothing, Psal. ii. 7. 8. yea, and a son who has been obedient, Heb. v. 8. and thereby glorified God, John xvii. 4. seeing also he is placed in that office by the will and appointment of the Father, Psalm cx. 4. and pleads upon the grounds of justice; being our advocate, he pleads upon his being a propitiation, 1 John ii. 1. 2. his blood itself speaks, Heb. xii. 24. and that in heaven too, Heb. xii. 22. 23. 24. and he seconds the cry thereof himself, seeing also he hath power to do what he will himself,

as an absolute monarch, John v. 21. 26. and so says no more in his prayer but, *I will*, John xvii. 24. and so he cannot be said nay, Zech. i. 13. Father and Son having but one will, John x. 30. and seeing he is interceding with his own Father, 1 John ii. 1. John xx. 17. and so cannot but be answered, John xi. 41. 42. seeing he promised to hear him, even upon that score, Psal. ii. 8. yea, and with our Father, John xiv. 28. and xvi. 26. 27. seeing also his intercession extends to all cases and all persons that will come, and that to the uttermost degree, Heb. vii. 25. and is most free, not hindered by our staying back, Isa. lxxv. 24. nor our sin, but thereby the more stirred up; as a tender parent is affected with the child's straits, tho' procured by its own folly. I say, the consideration of this his intercession upon these scores, may cause believers abundantly to triumph against all that Satan, the world, or a false heart can say: for this is added as another ground of triumph, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that is making intercession for us.*

VERSES 35. 36. 37. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter) Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.*

THE apostle having laid down such excellent, and transcendently worthy grounds of triumph, cannot soon win off them, but must yet extract further from thence, soul-satisfying and heart-rejoicing conclusions, and so go on in his glorious triumph, and further challenging all enemies whatsoever, to do what they can, and so cuteth the glove, to speak so, and therefore he crieth out, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* having now got

got his feet fastened upon good ground, and seen Christ manifesting the strongest love that ever was heard of, dying, rising, sitting down at the right hand of God, and daily interceding for him and all believers; and therein also seen the love of God in Christ to all believers, justifying them for Christ's sake, whom he welcomed, as being fully satisfied with what he paid, and set him down upon the throne of majesty and power as their head, he now crieth out, *Who shall separate us from this love?* is there any evil in a world which shall hinder us from meeting with the fruits of that love? or hinder it from savingly shining upon us? and he says, *who*, in the masculine gender, and not *what*, in the neuter, as it were, thereby giving these particulars which he mentioneth afterward, all advantage imaginable, setting them forth as so many valiant champions and personable men, the more to make the victory, over such, famous. Now in particular, he reckoneth up several of these evils, which do ordinarily attend believers in a world, and which do ordinarily jumble them, and put them to question God's love towards them, and suspect that he had given up with them, and that they shall never enjoy the purchased inheritance and blessing; and he reckoneth them up by way of interrogation, as it were, casting the gantlet to all of them, and to every one of them, in way of holy defiance: And 1. *Shall tribulation*; that is, all affliction which is like to oppress and break a man, John xvi. 33.: 2. *or distress*; this is more, the word properly signifies, a straitness of place, whereby one being pinched, suffereth pain; and is translated to the mind, signifying such anxiety of spirit, as they know not what course to take, or what hand to turn them to: 3. *or persecution*; that is, such tyrannical violence as drives them from the land of their nativity, and makes them forced to wander in strange places: 4. *or famine*; that is, extreme scarcity of all necessities for the life, which is most intole-

nable: 5. *or nakedness*; that is, shame and disgrace, and such pinching poverty as they can hardly get their nakedness covered, and this is most grievous to generous spirits: 6. *or peril*; so as their life shall be still in jeopardy, being still under fear and in danger: 7. *or sword*; that is, any kind of violent death. That he might not be thought needlessly to affright and terrify believers with such dreadful calamities; he therefore proves, that such do attend them, and that the worst of these enumerated, were ordinary, and that the people of God have been acquainted with formerly; and for this cause citeth a passage out of Psalm lxi. 22. saying, *As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*: as if he had said, I do not of mine own head mention these troubles that attend the just, but I make it out to be the common lot of God's people in all ages; for in that Psalm, which has been penned upon occasion of the church and people of God their being persecuted for adhering to the Lord (whether under the Philistines, or under Antiochus, or some other) and is, as it were a prophecy of the case of the church of God in all ages, the people of God are slaughtered, and, as it were, taken to the shambles, and no more valued than as many sheep slaughtered for meat. Having thus reckoned up the worst that can befall the people of God hereaway in a way of holy defiance, he adds the ground of his triumph, verse 37. and therein coucheth an answer unto the former question, as if he had said, All these things, how sad and grievous they seem to flesh and blood, and hard to be endured, and how ready soever carnal reason be to conclude from thence God's hatred, and make souls question the love of God, yet cannot separate us from the love of Christ; these clouds cannot hinder the influences of his love from coming down unto us, nor should they make us question his love towards us; and then addeth the ground of

of this his confidence, saying, *But in all these, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us:* the word is most emphatical, signifying, *to overcome over and above, to overcome above measure, and exceeding gloriously, to have the better by many degrees.* So says he, these external crosses are so far from pushing us off our ground, these enemies are so far from overcoming us, that on the contrary we overcome them, and more than overcome them; *We are more than conquerors:* and least believers should hence wax proud, or impute any thing to their own strength, he addeth, *through him that loved us;* to shew that their stability was not caused through any thing in themselves, but in and thro' the strength of God, who had loved them freely.

Here likewise is a ninth motive unto a christian carriage under sad dispensations, which may be framed thus, If no sort of affliction or tribulation, which the people of God may meet with in a world, is able to separate them from Christ's love, or do them any skaith in that kind; then believers need not be much troubled with those things, but ought to walk christianly and valiantly under all these: But so it is, that no sort of affliction is able to separate us from the love of Christ, yea, in all these we are more than conquerors; There fore, &c.

From verse 35. OBSERVE,

I. As believers are conscious of their own weakness and impotence to ride out storms, and so are oft afraid that sore and sad calamities shall make them turn their back on Christ; so they are ready also to look upon sharp and pressing afflictions as not flowing from love, but rather from hatred, and thereby are ready to question the love of God to them, when he is pleased in his wise providence to exercise them so: for this cause the apostle doth strengthen believers against these, and say,

What shall separate us from the love of Christ?

II. Tho' believers being now in Christ, are safe from the reach of any just accusation or condemnation at the hands of Satan, or a misguided conscience, and have an interest in Christ, dying, rising again, and sitting down at the Father's right hand, and have a strong friend at court; yet all that will not excecme them from sad exercises, and several sorts of hardships in a world: for even such as may say, *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,* will meet with tribulation and distress, &c.

III. The afflictions that believers may look to meet with in a world, are not light in themselves, but such as are pressing and sharp, so as they shall be squeezed as in a wine-press, to speak so; they will meet with tribulation, and be; as it were, in the boots: for the word rendered tribulation, cometh from a verb that signifieth *to press* and *pinch*, as a strait shoe doth the foot.

IV. It were little to be under outward pressures, if the mind and spirit were at liberty; but believers will not only have outward affliction pressing them, but at the same time may expect to have their spirits bound in on all hands, that they shall see no possible way of escaping, but be in hazard of concluding themselves dead and gone, as 1 Sam. xx. 3. and they will be so invironed with trouble, as not to know to what hand to turn, as 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. and so be filled with anguish and vexation of spirit, so will they meet with distress.

V. So enraged and embittered are the wicked against the godly, that if they have any power, they will not suffer them to live in peace and quietness, but will use force and violence against them; and believers may expect no less at their hands (if the Lord restrain not) than open persecution;

ſecution; and therefore they ſhould keep a looſe grip of houſe and harbour, and reſolve to quit all their accommodations, and to be put, when the Lord thinks fit, to wander in deſerts, and in mountains, and in caves, and in dens of the earth, Heb. xi. 38.: for amongſt the reſt of the evils which attend believers in the world, *perſecution* is one; it were good then to be looking on this world, not as our home, but as the place of our exile.

VI. The portion of the godly not being in a preſent world, they need not expect much of it, but may lay their account to wreſtle with penury, pinched bellies, and ſcarcity of all things neceſſary for a preſent life, and to be from hand to mouth, and ſometimes not ſo well; they may reſolve even to meet with *famine*.

VII. So ſavage, barbarous, and cruel will the perſecutors of the godly be ſometimes, that they will not only baniſh them in deſerts, where they ſhall have no livelihood; but ſtrip them naked alſo, and expoſe them to the injuries of wind and weather; and tho' the wicked cannot enough ſet forth themſelves in gorgeous apparel, and glory in that which is but a covering to their ſhame and nakedneſs, and wear *ſtrange apparel*, Zeph. i. 8. yet the truly godly may be ſo pinched, as ſcarce to be able to procure what may cover their nakedneſs in honeſty, yea, and may be expoſed to ſhame and ſcorn, as having their nakedneſs uncovered; ſo will they meet with *nakedneſs*.

VIII. Yea, ſo hard may the life be that believers may have in a world, that they may know little what peace meaneth, and be daily in hazard of their lives, and ſo ſpend much of their time in jeopardy: thus they may be in *perils*. See 2 Cor. xi. 26.

IX. Not only may believers look for dangers and perils, but even may reſolve to meet with the worſt that men can do, who will be ſatisfied with no leſs than the death and utter deſtruction of the people

of God, as never thinking themſelves ſafe ſo long as they are in the land of the living; they muſt even look for the *ſword*, and this is the utmoſt that perſecutors can win to, Matth. x. 28. *Fear not them which can kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul.*

X. Howbeit theſe diſpenſations be ſad which believers may meet with in a world, yet doth not one, nor all of them, raiſe ſuch a thick cloud between Chriſt and them as to intercept the allurements and beams of love; nor ought they to be ſo looked on by believers as ſmelling of hatred in the Lord, or as evidencing his want of love towards them, and thoughts of caſting them off; nor ought theſe in the leaſt to cool their affections to him, or make them ſuſpect his affection towards them: for his challenging theſe, and ſaying, Can ſuch and ſuch things ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt, ſays as much as that they will not do, nor ſhould not do it; there is a negation in this, *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?*

XI. Faith taking a view of Chriſt in his humiliation and exaltation, and all for poor unworthy ſinners, will ſee ſo much unſpeakable love in every piece thereof towards them as nothing can quench, and will ſo animate and encourage the believer that ſees his intereſt in all that, as that he will be carried above the reach of all trouble, and will be able to endure the worſt of ſtorms, and ſo fore-caſt the worſt that can come, and not be ſhaken or diſmayed; and when faith is little in this exerciſe of reading lectures out of Chriſt's dying and riſing again, and acting the part of a prieſt for ever in heaven, that makes believers ſo ready to faint in a day of adverſity, and ſo ſoon ſhaken with the very fears of evil: That which made the apoſtle thus triumph and cry out, *Who can ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?* &c. was his poring in by faith upon Chriſt's laying down the price in his death, getting a ſubſcribed diſcharge in his reſurrection, enter-

entering heaven as our attorney, and waiting at the bar as our established advocate, mentioned in the former verse.

From Verse 36. OBSERVE,

I. Believers are so ready to promise great and sweet things to themselves, that it is hard to cause them believe that they may expect nothing but a hard lot in a world; and the worse the affliction be, they are the readier to imagine an exemption therefrom: and therefore when the apostle is speaking of the *sword*, he must confirm this, and say, *As it is written.*

II. As ministers should be loth, upon the one hand, to sooth up people, and promise them greater things than they have warrant for; so should they beware, upon the other hand, to propose needless scarcrows; and whatever, of the one kind or of the other, they hold forth, should be according to their warrant; as the apostle doth here, saying, *As it is written.*

III. The Spirit of God speaking in the Scriptures, being a Spirit of truth, should only be rested on as the ground of our faith, and hence only will consciences receive satisfaction, and not from the bare testimony of any man; and therefore, as ministers should propose this as the only ground for folks faith to settle on, *Thus saith the Lord*, or, *thus it is written*; so people should try all things by this rule, and receive nothing by an implicit faith: therefore saith he, *As it is written.*

IV. It may abundantly certify believers, that they have cause to expect a hard lot in a world, to know that it has been the lot of God's children in former generations; and it will help much to allay their grief and sorrow, when they are ready to look upon their case as singular and unparalleled, to hear how this is not their case alone; and therefore the apostle proves what he was saying, by citing a place out of the Psalms, where the church and people of God are held forth to have been in as ill,

if not a worse case, and this to allay their grief which they might conceive at what he said: *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day.*

From the passage cited OBSERVE,

I. It is no uncouth thing to see the followers of Christ persecuted and abused by wicked men; it has been the lot of the church of God in all ages from the beginning, to be wading through a sea of tribulation, and oftentimes she has been persecuted even to the death; for at this time *they were killed.* The followers of Christ must resolve on death, and must not save their lives when Christ calls upon them to lose them for his sake, for that were the high-way to lose them altogether.

II. The malice and ill-will of the enemies of the church and people of God, is not soon at an end, but is lasting and growing, rather than decaying, and will never end so long as there is any of the seed of the serpent to the fore: for say they, *We are killed all the day long.*

III. Such sympathy ought to be betwixt all the children of God, that whenever any of them are suffering under the feet of persecutors, it should go to the heart of all; all being members of one body, no part should be wounded but all should grieve and resent it, and sympathize with it, as sufferers, and so *weep with them that weep*, Rom. xii. 16. and *remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being also in the body.* Heb. xiii. 2. Therefore say these that were left alive from the fury and rage of the persecutors, *We are killed all the day long.*

IV. Though the wicked have no other quarrel against the godly, but that they are sincerely serving their Lord and Master, and adhering to his worship and commands, yet that will be enough to ground their malice and persecution; and this is always the root of their malice and malicious acts, under

under whatsoever specious pretexts they set their cruelty; therefore say they here, *for thy sake.*

V. The wicked, in their rage and heat against the godly, value no more their lives, (tho' they be *precious in the eyes of the Lord*, Psalm cxvi. 15.) than if they were sheep appointed for slaughter: they have always base thoughts of them, and think the world were the better to want them, and their death would tend to their advantage: *We are counted, say they, as sheep for the slaughter.* See 1 Cor. iv. 13.

From verse 37. OBSERVE,

I. Tho' the main thing that Satan is driving at, in raising persecution and tribulation against the godly, be to separate them from Christ, and shake their union loose; yet notwithstanding of all that, the knot shall hold, and when persecutors have done their worst to them, and got their lives, yet are believers victorious then, and are brought as close to Christ as they can be, being taken up to glory with him; and this they may be assured of before ever they enter into a dispute or conflict with affliction of any sort: *In all these things they are more than conquerors, and glorious conquerors.*

II. The strength and stability of the children of God, whereby they are kept in a day of temptation, is not from any stock of strength in themselves, but altogether from Christ their head and husband: therefore it is added, *through him.*

III. The victory that believers get over all their enemies, is not procured and merited through any good carriage in themselves, or any other thing as worthy, but it floweth only from the love and free undeserved grace and good will of Christ; and whatever favour or kindness we meet with, we should look upon it as flowing merely from love, that our hearts may warm with love towards him, and we may be stirred up to thankfulness: therefore

doth he put them in mind hereof, saying, *through him that loved us.*

VERSES 38. 39. *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

What he said last, *viz.* That nothing could separate us from the love of Christ, being so good news, and such an excellent ground of triumph, and such an encouragement to a comfortable christian walk under afflictions, he further confirmeth and illustrateth in these verses, saying, *I am persuaded*; I am, and all Christians may be persuaded; it is such a truth that no Christian should once doubt of it, yea, not only not doubt of it, but also should rest fully persuaded and convinced of the truth thereof, *viz.* That *nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* And this he amplifieth by a more particular enumeration of such things as believers might be most afraid of, or are most in hazard by, and reckons them up for the most part in so many pairs; as, 1. *Neither death, nor life*; that is, neither adversity, or such things as procure death, nor prosperity and abundance of all things which serve for this life. 2. *Nor angels, principalities, nor powers*; which are sometimes the titles that good angels get, Eph. i. 21. Col. i. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 22. and sometimes evil angels are set forth thus, Eph. vi. 12. Col. ii. 15. this same stile also is given to civil magistrates, Tit. iii. 1. We think it needless to take in good angels, and make a supposition, that they would labour to wrong the saints; and whether we take *angels* for evil spirits, and *principalities* and *powers*, for princes, potentates, and powers, in a world, or as holding

holding forth the evil spirits in their grand stiles, and in their grandeur and power, the more to illustrate the ground of triumph, it is not much material; and seeing Satan always, and the powers in a world, ordinarily, and for the most part, are but small friends to believers, and do use their power and moyen against them, and all in vain, we think both may be taken in here. 3. *Nor things present, nor things to come*; that is, neither these pressures and difficulties which are presently upon us, nor what may befall us afterward; no accident present or future, will have any efficacy to this purpose. 4. *Nor height, nor depth*; that is, neither honours, nor high places of preferment, nor yet contempt, dishonour, or disrespect in a world. 5. And then addeth a comprehensive general, *nor any other creature*; that is, no created thing in all the universe, be what it will. Next, what before he called *the love of Christ*, he now calleth, *the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*; to shew, (1.) that the love of Christ and the love of God is one; and, (2.) that this love of God, as it is purchased by Christ, so it cometh down to us in and through Christ, he is the bond of it: and then he says not, these things *shall not separate*, but he raiseth his tune higher, and saith, *these shall not be able to separate*; they shall not only not get it done, but they shall not so much as have any power for that effect.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is no small difficulty to get believers to ride securely at a sure anchor, without distracting and perplexing fear; so timorous and faint-hearted are they when oppressed with sad dispensations in a world, notwithstanding they be fixed on immoveable rocks, and shall never suffer shipwreck; for the apostle finds it necessary to confirm, that believers were more than conquerors in all afflictions and tribulations, by adding, *For I am persuaded, &c.*

II. As ministers should hold forth no-

thing unto people, of which they are not thoroughly convinced; so it will serve much to the bearing in of grounds of consolation upon the consciences of Christians, when they hold them forth as tried by their own experience, and found sure, they may both press them with the greater clearness and boldness, and they will be the more willingly welcomed and rested on; for the apostle, the more to fasten this ground of comfort, saith, *For I am persuaded, &c.*

III. Tho' there be many of God's precious children who are in darkness many a day, and have no light, and are wrestling with doubts anent their interest in Christ almost all their days, and can hardly ever win to such a clear view of their right to Christ as will dispel all clouds of darkness, and hush all doubts, and banish all fears and jealousies, see Cant. v. 2. 3. 6. Psalm li. 8. 12. 14. lxxvii. 1.---10. and lxxxviii. throughout. and xxxi. 22. Isa. l. 10.; yet clear and full assurance of faith is a thing attainable by believers, and some have actually attained thereto; for Paul here (not speaking of himself as immediately inspired, and as reading this by extraordinary light, but even of other believers as well as of himself,) says, *I am persuaded*: Yea, and not only may believers win to a certain persuasion of their present state, but, which is more, they may also win to a certain and infallible persuasion, that they shall persevere in that state, and shall not fall away; for it is of this mainly here which the apostle was persuaded.

IV. Believers have many sad adversaries to encounter with, yea, and adversaries on all hands, and adversaries of all kinds, spiritual and temporal, present and to come, life and death; they walk in the midst of extremities, and on every side may fear opposition; snares wait for them in all conditions of life, and always they are in hazard to be blown off their ground by contrary blasts and tides of temptation; they have *life and death, things present,*
and

and things to come, angels, principalities and powers, height and depth, to wreſtle againſt.

V. As afflictions, tribulations, famine, nakedneſs, peril, ſword, and whatſoever haſteneth, or occaſioneth death, is a ſharp exerciſe and trial unto the godly; ſo are they in no leſs hazard to be drawn aſide with the allurements, deceiving baits and pleaſures of proſperity, and they have as much need to guard againſt the fawnings of a world, as the ſharpeſt adverſity, yea, and more; for *life* here, no leſs than *death*, is their enemy: *Neither life nor death.*

VI. Believers have not only men of corrupt minds ſet on work by Satan to fight with, men of power and authority, but alſo devils, and ſuch ſpiritual ſubſtances as cannot be ſeen by bodily eyes, unleſs when they aſſume ſome bodily ſhape, as 1 Sam. xxviii. 14. they have theſe evil angels that fell from their integrity to wreſtle with; therefore it is added, *nor angels.*

VII. It is not one or two of ſuch inviſible wicked ſpirits that believers are to fight with, but there are many of them, a great army of theſe ſpirits, who are all enraged againſt the godly; therefore they are called *angels* and *principalities* in the plural number, and ſo are they always called; ſee Eph. vi. 12. Col. ii. 15.

VIII. Theſe evil ſpirits have, through God's wiſe permiſſion, for his holy ends, a prince-like power and dominion in the earth and air, hence called *the prince of the power of the air*, Eph. ii. 2. ſo as they may raiſe ſtorms, and bring down fire, Job i. 16. 19. and the like; and not only ſo, but alſo, they have ſome ſort of princely power over men both good and ill, to effect them with ſickneſs. Job ii. 7. Luke xiii. 16 to carry them from place to place, Matth. iv. 5. 8. yea, and to kill them, Job i. 19.; but more particularly they have a greater kind of authority over the wicked, whom they drive eaſily (thro' God's permiſſion) to all ſorts of wickedneſs, Eph. ii. 2. for in them

he worketh, and them he *leadeth captive at his will*, 2 Tim. ii. 26. hence they are called *principalities*.

IX. As they have in this manner authority and dominion; ſo have they power and might, being ſpiritual ſubſtances, whereby they may bring to paſs, thro' God's permiſſion, things far tranſcending the capacity of man, and ſo become terrible in their oppoſition to the children of God; therefore they are called *powers* alſo.

X. Believers not only have preſent preſſures to contend with, but alſo the fears of future evils and ſad occurrences, which is as ready to diſcourage them as any thing actually oppreſſing them; for it is added, *Or things preſent, or things to come.*

XI. As contempt and reproach, upon the one hand, is ready to trouble the children of God; ſo honour, eſtimation, and preferment in a world is as dangerous, if not more, and as ready to allure them, and draw them aſide; ſo that be they in little account, or in great account, they ought always to be upon their guard, and to watch; for it is added, *or height, or depth.*

XII. Tho' believers be thus ſurrounded with enemies on all hands, proſperity and adverſity, angels and men, dangers imminent and feared, dangers in all ſtations and relations; yet they ſtand as immovable rocks againſt all theſe waves; and tho' in and by theſe, they be in hazard, yet are they not, nor never ſhall be, fully and finally ſeparated from the love of God which is unchangeable, however their condition alter: *I am perſuaded*, ſays he, *that neither life nor death, -nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, &c.*

XIII. The ſolid and certain perſuaſion which the ſaints may have of their ſtability, notwithstanding of all ſtorms, is that which will make them more than conquerors, when wreſtling with adverſity of any ſort; and it is the want of this, and the

souls giving way to jealousies, fears, and suspicions, that makes them so ready to faint in trouble, and to have so little courage in adversity: This is clear in the apostle's adding this as the ground of his accounting himself more than a conqueror in all distresses, *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life,---shall separate us from the love of God, &c.*

XIV. The love of the Father and of the Son towards the children of God, is one and the same; so that we ought no more to question the love of the Father, tho' the person offended, than of the Son, tho' our cautioner; and it will be as impossible to get us separated from the one as from the other: therefore what before he called *the love of Christ*, he now calleth *the love of God*; which may also shew, that Christ is God.

XV. That which keepeth believers so fast anchored under the warm sun of the love of God, that nothing can drive them away, is nothing in themselves, but it is in and thro' Jesus Christ. this love is procured thro' Christ's merits, and comes down to believers in and thro' him as our

head; and so it is in him that our holding is sure and steadfast; and every thought of our steadfastness should mind us of him who is the Rock on which we stand, and the strong cable by which we are anchored, even Jesus Christ: therefore when he is speaking of the stability of believers, he calls to mind the knot, and says, *the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

XVI. This assurance is so far from loosening the reins unto all wickedness and lasciviousness, that the more a soul be persuaded of the love of God towards it in Christ, and of the impossibility of being banished by Satan or his instruments, for all their power and command, or by outward dispensations, it will the more heartily and cheerfully clasp about Christ, and embrace him, as Lord and chief Commander, and yield obedience to him with heart and hand: love cannot but flame when it is so beat on with the beams of his love; and love being once kindled puts all the wheels of the soul in motion; so that when he has said, *I am persuaded, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ*, he addeth, *our Lord.*



CHAPTER IX.

FINALLY, for the full clearing of the way of justification thro' faith in Christ, which is the main point of truth he hath been prosecuting all along hitherto, he removeth a main objection that lay in the way, and because this is a great matter, and of great use for both Jews and Gentiles, therefore he spends these three chapters upon it. We shall take up the objection thus: How can it be that your doctrine touching justification by faith in Christ, without the deeds of the law, can be truth; seeing the Jews, the only people and church of God do so storm at it, abhor it, and utterly reject it? So that if your doctrine be truth, it will clearly follow, that the Jews are now rejected of God; they are cast off, and are no more his church, seeing they abominate that way of salvation and justification, by faith in Jesus the son of Mary: But this is most absurd and false: for why? If the Jews the only people of God, the children of Abraham be rejected and cast out of the covenant, then all the

the promises of salvation which were made to them are broken and proven false and untrue: But this is blasphemous; Therefore the other is not true. For the full clearing of this matter, the apostle doth these four things mainly; 1. He granteth the rejection of the Jews, to verse 6. 2. He clearth how, notwithstanding hereof, God's promises are all true, to verse 30. 3. He sheweth the cause of their rejection, and thereby confirmeth, and further clearth the truth, concerning justification by faith, to chap. xi. And, 4. Lest he should utterly cast down the Jews, and give the Gentiles too much occasion to insult and boast, he treateth of the calling again of the Jews, and addeth, some useful admonitions unto the Gentiles, chap. xi.

In this chapter the apostle mainly doth these four things: 1. Tacitly acknowledgeth the rejection of the Jews, to verse 6. and this he rather insinuateth than openly professeth. 2. He maintaineth the faithfulness of God's promises notwithstanding thereof, upon several grounds, and answereth objections which might be made by carnal reason against the grounds he was laying down, to verse 24. 3. He speaketh more expressly of the Jews rejection, and the calling of the Gentiles, out of scripture, to verse 30. And then, 4. speaketh something of the cause of the Jews coming short of the good things promised, and of the Gentiles being made partakers thereof, to the end.

VERSE 1. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.*

IN the first five verses, because the most part of the Jews looked on the apostle as their sworn enemy, and so took nothing well which he spoke, and the apostle knowing this, and especially that it would incense them, and imbitter their spirits to hear that they should be rejected of God; and the Gentiles, whom they abhorred, should be taken in in their room; therefore lest he should irritate them, and provoke them to cast at his doctrine, to their own ruin and destruction, when he is now called to speak of that truth which questionless would gall them to the heart, he waves the express mentioning of that sad truth of their being rejected, and only coucheth it in, in his deep expressions of the sorrow and grief of heart for their case and condition: and thus he prudently laboureth to take away all suspicion of hatred, and to insinuate himself in their affections; and for this cause he holdeth forth the great love he had to them, and how near it went to his heart, that their case should be such as it is. But before he speaks any thing of this his great affection, fearing lest any

thing he would say should be suspected as not being true, therefore he prefixeth a great and weighty oath, that he might be the more believed, and saith, *I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost*: I speak truth, and Christ is my witness; so that *in Christ*, is as much as *by Christ*; or, *I speak the truth in Christ*; that is, as one that is in him; or, *in Christ*, that is, as acted, directed, and guided by Christ: so that taking all together it will say this; I speak the truth as becometh one who is in Christ, and who is acted by Christ, and so as I dare attest him to the truth thereof. Then says he, *I lie not*; as if he could not fully enough express himself in one sentence, and to shew, that what he said was not only truth, but also that he spoke it out of the sincerity of his heart; because a man may speak the thing that is true, and yet lie. *My conscience also bearing me witness*: He farther attests his conscience as touching the truth of what he was to affirm; he appeals to that divine thing *conscience*, and so declared, that his conscience was not contradicting what he said, but was all along assenting and bearing testimony to the truth: And further addeth, *in the Holy Ghost*, to shew, that the testi-

mony of his conscience was not to be slighted, or undervalued, seeing his conscience was not biased or misinformed, but was bearing witness, as acted and directed by the Holy Ghost, being sanctified by the Spirit of God; or those words may be referred to these words, *I lie not*, and is, as it were, an attesting of the Holy Ghost also; or rather the meaning may take in both, as if he had said, I take the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to witness, that I speak nothing but truth, and that without all guile or hypocrisy; my own conscience, sanctified and acted by the Spirit, bears me witness also that it is so.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Seeing where prejudice against a minister gets once footing among a people, necessary truths delivered by him will be rejected, tho' to their own ruin; therefore the ministers of the gospel should by all means labour to prevent any such mistakes, and so walk as they may give no just ground of any alienation of affection; and where prejudices and mistakes are groundlessly taken up, they should use all means possible to get them removed; for Paul here is very desirous to have the prejudice which the Jews had at him removed, for which cause he useth such a solemn protestation and asseveration as this, *I speak the truth in Christ, &c.*

II. Tho' it be utterly unlawful to swear at all vainly and rashly, Matth. v. 34. James v. 12. that being the taking of God's name in vain, contrary to the third commandment; yet under the gospel, as well as under the law, an oath taken with all due circumstances is allowed of God, and lawful; after the example of Paul here, who useth a solemn and grave oath, saying, *I speak the truth in Christ,--my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost*; see Rom. i. 9. 2 Cor. i. 23. there being the same necessity for it now, which was of old, viz. the confirming of truth, and ending of debates, Heb. vi. 16.

III. In our oaths we should be loth to call God, the searcher of hearts, to witness an untruth, lest he prove *a swift witness against us*, Mal. iii. 5. but should swear that which is truth, and avouch nothing but what we are persuaded is truth; as the apostle doth here, who says, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not*. Not only should the thing be true, but also we should know certainly that it is so, and be persuaded thereof.

IV. It is not enough that the thing which we avouch in an oath be true, but it must also be weighty and grave; it must be no trivial business, or a matter of small concernment, but a business of great consequence and moment, and which cannot otherways be got decided and concluded; for such a matter was this, for which the apostle was constrained to say, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness*. The matter of his affection could otherways, satisfactorily be got proven, and it was of great consequence to have it made out.

V. The Son of God, and the Holy Ghost, are God equal with the Father in power and glory, to whom divine worship is due no less than to the Father, for all three are one God, the same in substance; for here swearing, which is a piece of religious worship, Deut. x. 10. is by Christ and the Holy Ghost, and is due only to God, Deut. vi. 13.: *I say the truth in Christ, and in the Holy Ghost*; for we may look upon these expressions, as his attesting of these as witnesses.

VI. As Christians should meddle with nothing but what is commanded and allowed of God, as to the matter; so should they be careful also, that in every thing, were it but the speaking of a word, they carry themselves spiritually, sincerely, and honestly, as acted by the Spirit of God, and living and walking in Christ; for the apostle Paul says here, *I say the truth*; and how? *in Christ*: *I lie not*; and how? *in the Holy Ghost*.

VII. There is such a thing as a conscience

science in every man and woman, which attends them constantly, be about what business they will, it is a constant companion: *My conscience.*

VIII. This conscience is not the man's self, but it is something distinct and different from the man's self, being a power there deputed for God, to act for him, and to walk by his rules, and to be as a censor over the man in all he doth; *my conscience bearing me witness*, and so it was distinct from himself; and was bearing witness of what himself was saying, and so distinct from himself.

IX. This conscience, which is as God's deputy in every man and woman, is particularly acquainted with every action the man goeth about, is privy to all he doth, be it a matter of small moment, or of greater concernment; for here conscience takes notice of Paul's speaking but a word, *I speak the truth*, says he, *my conscience bearing me witness.*

X. This conscience, when sanctified by the Spirit of God, and in a good frame, will not only take notice of the substance of the action which a man goeth about, whether it be lawful or unlawful; but also of the frame of Spirit which the man hath, while he is discharging the duty, and of the manner of his discharging of it, whether it be in a christian manner or not: for the apostle says, *I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness*; his conscience took notice, (for so we may understand the words also) not only of his *speaking truth*, but of his *speaking truth in Christ*, as became a Christian, and sincerely without guile and deceit, that he spoke truth, and did not lie.

XI. Not only is conscience privy to what a man doth, both as to matter and manner, but also is accordingly affected, and can signify its sense of the man's action, it can give its verdict of what the man doth, be it good or evil, as to matter and manner, or both: for here it is said, to

bear witness, and so to approve of that which the apostle was about.

XII. Conscience rightly informed, and in a sanctified frame, will not approve and commend the action, or the man in doing of it, tho' the action be good in itself, if there be no more, if all the circumstances which make up a christian action be not present; if the action be not performed in a right manner, from a right principle, and to a right end, conscience will never be pleased; so that a man may be doing that which is right in itself, and yet want the testimony of his conscience: for Paul was not only *speaking truth*, but he had also *his conscience bearing witness*, because he was honest, even as to the manner of his speaking.

XIII. When conscience is rightly informed, and in a spiritual temper, its testimony is most divine and impartial; much weight should be laid upon it, it being a spiritual discernor of things, and unbiassed; and the attesting of conscience is a weighty and solemn business, and should be gravely and solemnly gone about: for here the apostle puts the testimony of his conscience in with the testimony of God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, saying, *My conscience also bearing me witness.*

XIV. Tho' the testimony of conscience may not be appealed unto in trivial and light matters, or irreverently and rashly, it being such a grave and weighty matter to attest conscience; yet a Christian, in some cases, and at some times, may lawfully appeal to his conscience when the case requireth it, that God may thereby get glory and others may be edified; and there is no other way to get the matter cleared, as here; and it must be done soberly, deliberately, and weightedly: as Paul doth here, saying, *My conscience bearing me witness, in the Holy Ghost.*

XV. A minister, when lying under great calumnies whereby the work of God is marred in his hand, and lying under mistakes whereby others are hindered from pro-

profiting by the word in his mouth, and there being no other way whereby these mistakes and calumnies shall be removed and taken off, may lawfully, when in a spiritual and heavenly temper and frame, solemnly appeal to his conscience in vindicating himself from these aspersions and grounds of jealousy; after Paul's example here, who finding the jealousies the Jews had of him as their enemy, were certainly like to hinder them from believing the truth, and such as could no otherways be removed, says here in a solemn manner, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness.*

XVI. When conscience is thus duely and rightly appealed to, it should abundantly in reason satisfy us as to the truth of what is affirmed under such a solemn attestation; Paul's taking this way, saith, that this might in reason have sufficed the Jews: *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, &c.*

XVII. Though every man hath a conscience within him, yet every man hath not a like good conscience; some have their *conscience defiled*, Tit. i. 4. some *pure*, 1 Tim. iii. 9. 2 Tim. i. 3. and *void of offence*, Acts xxiv. 16. some *weak*, some *strong*, 1 Cor. viii. 7. 10. 12. some have a *seared conscience*, 1 Tim. iv. 2. some a *conscience accusing or excusing*, Rom. ii. 15. some an *evil conscience*, Heb. x. 22. and some a *good conscience*, Acts xxiii. 1. 1 Tim. i. 5. 19. Heb. xiii. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 16. 21. some a foul conscience needing *purging*, Heb. ix. 14. some a conscience sanctified, and acting in the Holy Ghost, as here; and this should be endeavoured after: *My conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.*

XVIII. It is very refreshful and comfortable to have a conscience sanctified and in a good frame befriending a man, and this is it which will satisfy him, and bear him up under reproaches, Acts xxiii. in crosses, 1 Pet. ii. 19. 20. and under challenges, 1 John iii. 21. as it doth Paul here, who comforted himself with this, that his

conscience was bearing him witness in the Holy Ghost.

XIX. Not only should we consult conscience, when we are enterprizing any thing, and ask the judgment of conscience when we have done with the action; but seeing conscience is looking upon us in the very time while we are about an action, and hath some sense and judgment of what we are doing and saying, and can some way acquaint the man therewith; therefore we should, even in the mean time while we are about the action, be consulting conscience, and reflecting thereupon, and this will evidence a tender frame and disposition, as Paul doth here: he is speaking the truth, and he is adverting to what conscience is saying of him in the mean time, whether it be accusing or excusing him, and he finds it approving him, and bearing witness for him: therefore says he, *My conscience bearing me witness.*

XX. It becomes us all so to walk, even in the manner of the discharge of our duties, as to have our consciences going along with us and approving us: so that though we cannot always actually reflect and find the explicate testimony and verdict of conscience; yet we ought so to walk, as that the thing we do be right, and the frame of our spirit in going about it be stayed and composed, so as conscience be kept in a good tune, and be ready to give its approbation, when consulted: as it was with Paul here, who went about his expressing his great affection towards the Jews with such composedness of spirit, as he carried along with him a good conscience, and had its approbation, saying, *My conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.*

VERSES 2. 3. *That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh.*

HAVING thus, for the conciliating of credit, used a grave and weighty attestation

testation and oath, he now cleareth how groundless their jealousies were of him, and how little cause they had to suspect the reality of his affection towards, and estimation of them; he therefore first points forth his affection towards them, verses 2. 3. and then holds forth how highly he esteemeth of them, verses 4. 5. where he reckoneth up all their privileges, which they had as being the people of God. And all this while, tho' he be immediately upon the back of this to speak of clearing God notwithstanding of their rejection; yet he doth not expressly make mention of their off-casting, but rather doth insinuate so much, and yet so clearly, as all of them might be convinced of the truth, by expressing his great grief for their case. Therefore, says he, *I have heaviness*; that is anguish and pain, as of a woman in travail; for the word signifieth so, John xvi. 21. and not only so, but *great heaviness*; the grief which I have conceived at your condition is not ordinary, but more than ordinary: and also *continual sorrow in my heart*; your case goeth near my heart, and causeth grief to my spirit, and sorrow that is lasting, continual sorrow. All which he further confirmeth, verse 3. where he holdeth forth the greatest expression of affection imaginable, saying, *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh*; what more testimony and proof of love can a man desire, than thus to be content to be cast out of the church, as one anathematized, for his friends, if that could do them good, and help them out of their condition: now, says the apostle, if it were possible that I could save you, and deliver you out of that state of rejection in which ye are, by becoming an anathema myself, I could be content, so strong is my affection towards you; so far am I from rejoicing at your sad condition, who were once a people so much accounted of: he was, in a manner, so transported with the strength of his affection to God's glory in the mat-

ter, and their salvation, that he waves the consideration of his being a privileged person, and darts his eyes only towards that which he was bent upon, as Moses in a like case, Exod. xxxii. 32. in that he could wish himself an anathema. He seems to allude unto the custom of the Heathens, who called him, whom they had destined to death to pacify the gods for their iniquity, and the removal of some judgment that was upon them, and so wished to be abhorred of God, and accounted a *cherem*, or devoted thing, which behoved to be killed, Lev. xxvii. 28. 29. and then addeth, *for my brethren my kinsfolk according to the flesh*; to them, that whatever they would alledge, yet he had not shaken off all natural affection, but looked upon them as his brethren and kinsfolk, and how strong this tie of natural conjunction was to him, and should be to others.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' carnal people, who judge of things amiss, do look upon ministers as their rank enemies, because of their freedom; yet notwithstanding of all this freedom which faithful ministers may, and will use, they may carry a strong affection even towards these with whom they are most free. Tho' the Jews were jealous of Paul, and looked upon him as their enemy, because he told the truth, as Gal. iv. 16. also; yet here he sheweth that their jealousy was groundless, and how dearly he loved them; for he was sore vexed with their condition, and was in *heaviness and continual sorrow*, &c.

II. The best proof that a minister can give of his strong affections towards carnal people, who do much question the same, is to express the real grief and sorrow of his heart for their woful and wretched condition; as Paul doth here, saying, *I have great heaviness and continual sorrow*.

III. The unchurching of a particular visible church being a sad judgment, Rev. ii. 5. is matter of grief and sorrow to any

of the children of God, and will be to all that are truly religious and tender, minister or people, a matter of great grief and continual sorrow: it cannot choose but go near the heart of a true child of God, to see him giving their mother a bill of divorce: for this was it which made Paul here be *in heaviness, and have continual sorrow of heart.*

IV. Ministers, in dealing with an exasperated people, should follow a christian prudent way of insinuating themselves in their affections, and for this cause should wisely forbear any expression which may irritate; yet so as truth may thereby suffer no prejudice, and therefore should tacitly and indirectly point out that which would incense them if spoken in even-down terms: as Paul doth here, who will not say expressly, that God had unchurched them, or cast them off; yet he hints at as much, and leaves them to gather it out of his great *grief and heaviness.*

V. Though the children of God should quietly submit unto all God's dispensations, and put their mouth in the dust, and reverence his doings towards others, how dear soever they be to them; yet this should not jumble out natural tenderness, pity and compassion, and hinder them from condoling the condition of such; both these may well subsist together: for tho' Paul knew that this dispensation which these Jews were under, was according to God's will and wise purpose, and so in that respect did christianly submit, and did not fret and repine; yet his religion did not banish his natural affection, and make him a stoick, but for all that he was *in heaviness and continual sorrow of heart.*

VI. So dearly should all ministers love, and so earnestly should they desire the salvation of such as are under their charge, and also all Christians should so seriously desire the salvation of others, that they should be content to be at any loss imaginable and possible, for the procuring of the same, and should think nothing too

dear for that effect: for Paul here says, *I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren.*

VII. Christianity doth not loose the bonds of nature, nor cool natural affection, but rather helps it, and makes it to run in a right channel: Paul has this strong affection to such as were his kinsmen according to the flesh.

VERSES 4. 5. *Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;*

Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

NEXT, to persuade them of his high estimation of them, the apostle reckoneth up the privileges wherewith the Lord had honoured them: And 1. says he, *Who are Israelites;* that is, come of noble and valiant Jacob, who as a prince prevailed with God, and for that cause was called *Israel*, so that whatever honour was in that name which God so remarkably gave to Jacob, they were made sharers thereof. 2. *To whom pertaineth the adoption;* that is, they are the only people whom God has chosen out of all the rest of the nations, and are become his chosen people, his sheep, and hence are named, *his first-born*, Exod. iv. 22. *his peculiar treasure*, Exod. xix. 5. and *the lot of his inheritance*, Deut. xxxii. 9. 3. *and the glory;* that is, they had the pre-eminence and excellency beyond all other nations, as having the tabernacle of the Lord pitched among them; in which respect he is said to *walk among them*, Lev. xxvi. 11. 12. out of which tabernacle the Lord gave his responses, and so is called, *the habitation of his glory*, Psal. xxvi. 8. and the ark is called *his glory*, 1 Sam. iv. 21. 22. 4. *and the covenants;* that is, the moral law, which God delivered unto them in two tables of stone,

stone, and therefore mentioned in the plural number; which were called, *the tables of the covenant*, Deut. ix. 11. 15. Heb. ix. 4.

5. *The giving of the law*; that is, the judicial law, whereby they were ruled as a commonwealth, all their judicial statutes were given by the mouth of God, Deut. iv. 8. not by man, as the laws of other nations were, such as Solon, Licurgus, Numa, Draco, and the like.

6. *And the service of God*; that is, the ceremonial law, or the rites, ceremonies, and way how the Lord would be worshipped; these were the ordinances of divine service spoken of, Heb. ix. 1.

7. *And the promises*; that is the covenant of grace, which contained the promises of grace and glory, wherein every thing held forth is freely promised, and all things necessary to a soul here or hereafter, are freely promised.

8. *Whose are the fathers*; that is, they are descended of noble progenitors, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, men eminently beloved of God and eminent in piety, men with whom the Lord made a covenant, Gen. xvii. 4. and so they sprung from a people in covenant with God, who sheweth mercy to the thousand generation of them that love him and keep his commandments, Exod. xx. 6.

9. *And of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came*; a great honour indeed to this nation of the Jews, that Christ the only Son of God came of them, and took his human nature of them; he who by his incarnation, and taking on our nature, hath honoured all mankind, and made us, in this respect, greater than angels, whose nature he did not take on; he came of the Jews, and so was, according to the flesh, nearer of kin to them than to others, and this was no small piece of honour. And for the further clearing of the excellency of this eminent one, who was so near of kin to the Jews, he further describeth what an one he was, and that, so as the Jews might not be so enraged against him as they were, but might carry more affection towards him, and to the way

of justification thro' him; and therefore after he has shortly described his person he closeth with an *amen*, going before them in what he would gladly have had them doing. He describeth him in his two natures, as man and God; as man he had his original of the Jews, and therefore he says, *of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came*; he came of the Jews, but it was according to the flesh, or his human nature; and this supposeth that he had another nature, *viz.* a divine nature; and therefore he addeth, *God*; to shew, that as he was man, so was he true God: and for further confirming of this, he addeth two epithets of God; as 1. That he is *over all*; which sheweth his glory and power to be equal with the Father's, in that he is far beyond all fathers and persons whatsoever, yea, and over all things in heaven and earth. 2. *Blessed for ever*; an epithet which agreeth only to the true God, and which also pointeth forth his eternity. And then, that he might engage the Jews to fall in love with Christ, who is such an excellent person, he casteth a copy unto them, and crieth out, *Amen*; as if he had said, I am heartily content with this Mediator, who is God blessed for ever; my soul closeth with him, and I rest upon him, and am fully satisfied in him, and with him.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Seeing carnal men stand much upon their external privileges, and account him their enemy who would seem to lessen them, or deny them: therefore, seeing it may gain such in some measure, or at least, it may open a door for their gaining, we would deny to such none of their titles, or honours, and due privileges, and thereby prevent their irritation, as Paul doth here: he will deny them none of their due privileges, but reckons them up to the full, saying, *Who are Israelites*, &c.

II. It is a great discredit unto a people, when degenerated from the heavenly stout-

ness, and christian courage and faithfulness of their ancestors; for the Jews looked on this as one of their privileges, that they were Israelites, descended of excellent and mighty Jacob, and so would have taken it ill to have had this title denied unto them, and would have looked on such, as accounting them degenerate persons: Paul says, *Who are Israelites.*

III. It pleased the Lord, out of his matchless and free love, to make choice of the seed of Abraham, among all the tribes of the earth, to be his first-born, Exod. iv. 22. to bring into a covenant-state; tho' their father was an Amorite, and their mother an Hittite, Ezek. xvi. 3. 8. so that they were the only people of God upon the face of the earth; for them only did he choose to be his peculiar treasure, and his visible church upon earth; to them *belonged the adoption.* See Deut. iv. 37. x. 15. and xiv. 2. Acts xiii. 17. Exod. xix. 15. Psal. cv. 6. and cxlv. 4.

IV. It is a notable and excellent privilege, whatever carnal wretches think, to be a visible church to the Lord, and made partakers of all these allowances which church-members have a right unto: it is one of the privileges of the Jews, that to them *belonged the adoption.*

V. It is the excellency and glory of a land to have the ordinances of God in life and power among them, the signs of God's presence, and dwelling in the midst of them, defending them, hearing their prayers, making his mind known unto them, and otherways holding forth proofs of his love and good-will: it is another privilege, that theirs was the *glory*, to them *belonged the glory.*

VI. It is a mercy much to be valued, (however ignorant folks think otherways, who love licentiousness) for a people to have the mind of God explained unto them, that they may know how to walk before the Lord; it is no small privilege indeed, that they had *the covenants.*

VII. Though man, as being a creature,

was bound to obey his Maker in all things required, tho' the Lord had never made a promise of any reward upon the performance; yet for the further encouragement of people unto obedience, he thought fit to hire man to it, and for that cause did enter into a covenant and paction, and therein engaged himself to bestow such and such blessings, upon condition of obedience: for this law being thus proposed covenant-ways, is here termed, *the covenants*; and the tables of the law are called, the tables of the covenant, as containing the sum of all that which God requireth of man, and man engageth, or ought to engage to perform.

VIII. The people of the Jews, as they were in many particulars privileged beyond all the people of the world beside; so in this, that they had the Lord setting down laws to them, as they were a commonwealth, and so were a state under no legislative power but God, he it was who prescribed all their municipal laws, and so their government was really a theocracy: it is another of their privileges, that to them *belonged the giving of the law*, viz. judicial.

IX. Seeing it is impossible to please God any way except that which he has carved out himself, all other service being only will-worship; these are a people much privileged, who are not left to their own invention in this, but have the way plainly cut out to their hand: and of all people, these are the happiest who have the true God as the object of their worship, and the right way laid open how that true God must be worshiped: such are the only privileged people, who have *the service of God.*

X. Howbeit the Lord thought fit to deal with the infant church of the Jews, otherways than now under the gospel, viz. by types, and figures, and ceremonies, and such like, and to hold forth his covenant in a manner like a covenant of works; yet really he entered into a covenant

nant of grace with ſuch; a covenant which was free, and full of free grace, wherein whatever was promiſed was freely promiſed, man doing nothing which might merit at God's hand: it was a covenant of promiſes, all freely granted and given, and therefore this covenant of grace is called, *the promiſes*, as being nothing but all promiſes.

XI. Let a nation have whatever riches, honours, and other carnal things imaginable, and want the offer of this excellent covenant of free grace, their condition is ſad and lamentable; and theſe are the only honoured and privileged people who have this covenant moſt fully, clearly, and powerfully laid open unto them. Theſe privileged Jews, they *had the promiſes*.

XII. Tho' men of the earth glory in this, that they are the poſterity of ſuch who have been in great honour and eſteem in a world, for valour, wealth, greatneſs, and the like; yet it is far more advantageous to be the poſterity of ſuch as have been in covenant with God, ſeeing this covenant-relation deſcends from parents to children, and thereby, with their parents, are accounted members of the viſible church, having a right to all the privileges which do belong to ſuch: therefore as another privilege, it is ſaid, *Of whom are the fathers*.

XIII. The Jews, the poſterity of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, have this to boaſt of, that no people ever had, or ever will have, *viz.* that the promiſed Meſſias, the Saviour of the world, came of them, and took his human nature from among them: and it will not be natural kindred that any can reckon to Chriſt that will prove ſaving; but only a new creature will be accepted, whether the perſon be a Jew or a Barbarian, &c.; of the Jews, *as concerning the fleſh*, Chriſt came, and yet they were caſt off for all that.

XIV. A particular viſible church may be honoured with many external privileges, yea, and privileges not ordinary,

and may be a ſtanding church for a long time, and yet at length God may be ſo provoked with their ſins as to unchurch them, and caſt them off, and declare them to be *Lo-ammi*, for all that: for this the apoſtle doth inſinuate here, and this is the ground of his following diſcourſe.

XV. The more famous a church has been for advantages and external privileges, it ſhould go nearer the heart of any of God's children, to know or hear of their off-caſting: for Paul hereby confirmeth the reality of the grief of his heart for their condition.

From Chriſt's deſcription obſerve,

I. As there was a neceſſity that juſtice might be ſatiſfied by the ſame nature that ſinned, Heb. ii. 14. ſo alſo for our behoof and advantage, there was a neceſſity that Chriſt Jeſus our Mediator ſhould be man, to ſuffer and obey for us, and make interceſſion, as a ſympathizing high-prieſt, Heb. vii. 24. 25. 26. and accordingly Chriſt, in the fulneſs of time, took on him our nature, and became really man, having all the natural and eſſential properties, which neceſſarily and inſeparably agree to man, Luke xxiv. 39. John xx. 27. 1 John i. 1. being made of one blood with the reſt of his brethren, having his genealogy from Adam, Luke iii. 38. and he is hence called, *the Son of man*, Matth. viii. 20. and x. 23. and our brother, Heb. ii. 17. and ſo here, he is come of the Jews, *as concerning the fleſh*; which clearly pointeth forth his human nature; it being added, to clear how he came of the Jews.

II. As our Mediator was man, and behoved to be ſo becauſe of our neceſſities; ſo that what he did and ſuffered might be available and ſatiſſactory, he was really and truly God, equal with the Father in power and glory, and is called, *the true God*, 1 John v. 20. ſo is he here called, *God*, abſolutely, (with an article too, as Acts xx. 28.) without any reſtriction or limitation.

tion, or any circumstance which may import an impropriety of speech, as there is, when this also is given to men, Exod. vii.

1. Psal. lxxxii. 6. yea, with such additions, as do more forcibly evince the same, being called, *God over all, blessed for ever*; where tho' it be attributed to Christ by way of a predicate, and not as a subject; yet it signifieth not any divine perfection, but the divine substance no less than when it is predicated of the Father, 1 Kings xviii. 21. yea, and sometimes it is attributed by way of a subject to Christ, Isa. xxxv. 4. with Matth. i. 21.

III. Albeit these two natures in Christ, be really distinct, so as what is attributed to the one, cannot be properly attributed to the other; it cannot be said of the Godhead, that it came of the Jews; nor of the manhood, that it was from eternity, and self-blessed; yet Christ has but one person, both these natures being united, not *naturally*, into the same essence, essential properties, or nature, but *personally*; the second person of the Trinity assuming the human nature into the same subsistence with itself, so that both those natures do not concur as parts of the same person; for his divine nature was a complete person before his incarnation: for here it is the same person who came of the Jews, who is said to be *God over all, blessed for ever*. See Heb. ii. 16. Phil. ii. 7. Rom. i. 3. 4.

IV. As Christ is transcendent and excellent in himself, being the chief among ten thousand, and every way matchless and incomparable; so hath he power and authority over all things in heaven and in earth, 1 Cor. xv. 27. John iii. 31. he is *over all*; this omnipotency, as his divine nature, he hath not from the Father by way of gift, as he had his exaltation, Eph. i. 21. Phil. ii. 9. but by eternal generation, and so this his omnipotence proves him to have been God.

V. God only is blessed in and of himself, and the author of all blessings to others; he is self-blessed, and to him only

doth this epithet *blessed*, belong, as Rom. i. 25. he is *God blessed for ever*.

VI. Christ Jesus is the eternal and unchangeable Jehovah; he was from all eternity, and will continue blessed in himself to all eternity: he is *God blessed for ever*. See John xvii. 5. i. 1. and viii. 58. Prov. viii. 22. 23.

VII. Howbeit Christ, when he came down in the form of a servant, *humiliated himself, and was of no reputation*, Phil. ii. 7. 8. and was *despised*, and accounted *stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*, Isa. liii. 3. 4. yet considering how the same one who was so far humbled, was God equal with the Father, the fountain of all blessedness, eternal, and omnipotent, it should abundantly commend him to the hearts both of Jews and Gentiles; for that the Jews might no more have a prejudice at this son of Mary, who was the Messiah, nor at the way of life by him, he adds this description of Christ in his two natures, and so sets him forth as a complete Mediator, thoroughly furnished for his work, being both God and man, and God and man in one person: therefore he adds, *Who is over all, God blessed for ever*.

VIII. As all the descriptions of Christ, in his person, natures, and offices, serve to commend him to us, and to point him forth to be truly excellent in himself, and worthy of all acceptance; so we should never hear him spoken of, or commended, but our hearts should run after him, and our souls should close with him cheerfully; as the apostle doth here, who saith, *Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen*. See Gal. i. 5.

IX. The more that Christ, and the way of salvation thro' faith in him, be cast at by others, and rejected as vain, the more should the faithful avouch him, and their interest in him, and their resolution to adhere to him, and chose him as their portion, and rest upon him alone for salvation; for now when the Jews were undervaluing Christ, and the way of justification thro' him,

him, he will stand the more to it, by saying, *Amen. God blessed for ever. Amen.*

VERSE 6. *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.*

After the apostle has hinted at as much as that they were unchurched, and cast off for the most part, and now a people without the reach of the promises, and so without hope of heaven; he now cometh to answer the objection which would be made against it. It might be said, If we be thus rejected and unchurched, as you alledge, then there is not a promise of grace and glory, that we can expect, shall be accomplished in us; for such as are without the visible church, can have no hope of any of these promises: but then if it be so, it will follow, that the word of God hath taken none effect; that is, it will follow, that that comfortable promise made to Abraham, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed*, (wherein grace and glory, and things tending to the good of a soul, and communion with God here or hereafter, is promised,) should not be accomplished, but fail, and prove of none effect. To this he answereth, *Not as though the word of God had taken none effect*: Granting the consequence to be true, that the promises of God cannot fail, the Lord is true, and it is impossible that he should lie; but he denieth the consequence, or that it will follow, that because the most part of the Jews are now cast off, that therefore God's promises should fail: where, by *the word of God*, we are not to understand, with Arminians, the general offers of the gospel, which are made to all, without any difference; or that word wherein he declareth his purpose to save all them that believe, and condemn them that believe not; for then, 1. this word of God had taken effect, tho' there had not been one soul saved, for it had remained true upon the other part; but

sure the apostle's answers say as much as that his word had not taken effect, if there had not been some true Israelites, some true seed or children of the promise; but this purpose of God according to election might have stood, though the elder had never served the younger, contrary to verses 11. 12. 2. Notwithstanding of all this word, it might have come to pass, that not one soul should have been saved, and there never had been a child of promise; especially considering, that it is affirmed by them, that it is in man's power to believe or not, as he pleaseth; but Paul clearly affirmeth the contrary. 3. If so there could be no ground for this objection; Paul could never have imagined, that it would once have entered into their minds: for what colour of reason, yea, or of sense either, is in this, If we be rejected because of not believing in Christ, then the word of God, wherein he declareth, that all that believe not shall be rejected, shall be of none effect, and fail; and so surely the Jews could not have taken it up so. 4. And if this was not the Jews meaning, neither was it the apostle's meaning. otherwise he had not taken notice of their objection at all, and so had no way removed it, which is not only false, but blasphemous. 5. And put the case, that both the Jews and the apostle had taken up *the word of God* in this sense, yet I am sure his answers would have been altogether impertinent; for if so, what needed he ever have distinguished *true Israelites* from others that are of *Israel*, and *the children of the flesh* from *the children of the promise*; and thereby signify, that the word failed not to the true Israelites, and the children of the promise, whereas it failed not either to the rest, if this be the meaning of it? So then the words must not be taken up thus, as signifying God's mind to account such as believe, children and heirs of the promises, or of life eternal, and such as believe not, strangers to these promises, and to life; but by *the word of God*, is here meant, the

the promises of special note made to the elect ones; the promise of life and salvation, which, tho' proclaimed and declared to all such as are of Israel, to the children of the flesh and of the promise, even to all the visible church, yet doth properly belong to the elect ones; and as to such they shall always take effect, tho' all the rest be rejected, and unchurched. And that notwithstanding of the rejection of the most part of the Jews, yet these special and spiritual promises made to the elect shall never fail, he proveth, unto verse 14. and in this verse is his first argument, in these words, *For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel*; as if he had said, You think that the saving promises, comprehended under that great one, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed*, did properly belong, and were made to all the seed of Jacob, and all that did lineally descend of him; whereas they did belong properly to the true Israelites, the elect chosen Israelites, who declare themselves such by faith in Christ, and as to those it never faileth; and therefore tho' the reprobate unbelieving Jews be rejected, it will not follow, that these saving promises made to the true Israelites, shall become of none effect.

. OBSERVATIONS.

I. Not only should ministers propose truth unto people, but also should labour to clear it fully unto them, that so it may stick the more closely, and loose all objections that might be made to the contrary, as the apostle doth here.

II. So stupid and senseless may a perverse degenerate people be, that even while they are lying under a most heavy stroke and judgment of God, yet may be altogether insensible and ignorant thereof; yea, so ignorant as to plead the contrary against any that will say it: as here, these Jews for the most part were cast off of God, and yet they could not be got convinced of it, but were here ready to have

disputed for the contrary, and were ready to object against the apostle, and so put him to answer.

III. Altho' the church of God be a company of such as profess faith in Christ Jesus, yet all that are within the visible church are not members of Christ's invisible or mystical body, and have not true and lively faith, but even under a profession may be utterly void of grace and godliness: *All that are of Israel, are not Israel.*

IV. Though there be several privileges belonging to the visible church, and the particular members thereof; yet it is not to such as visible members that all the promises of the covenant of grace do belong; for they are made properly and mainly unto the invisible church of believers, (separated from the rest, according to God's everlasting decree of election,) which is his mystical body, his spouse, and his ransomed ones; for the apostle affirms here, that that promise, *I will be thy God*, did not belong to all that *were of Israel*, but to those that were truly *Israel*, that is, to true Israelites indeed, who are indeed the children of God.

V. There are none more ready to grip to the promises, and challenge them as theirs, than such as have no interest in them, or right to them; as we see the Jews were ready here to grip to the promise of life and communion with God, or to the promise of having God for their God, who had no right to it.

VI. As presumption, or folks groundless challenging an interest in the promises, which do not belong to them, lulls them over into a state of security, so as they break their necks on that rock, and undo themselves quite; so also it blindfolds them that they cannot perceive nor be sensible of God's judgments pursuing them, even tho' they be lying under the heavy pressure thereof; for so the Jews their challenging a right to the promise of God, made them now so senseless and stupid, that

that they could not believe they were rejected, when indeed they were.

VII. However *the hope of the hypocrite ſhall periſh*, and ſuch as without warrant lay hold on promiſes which belong not to them, and build their hopes thereupon, may and ſhall be diſappointed; yet God, who is truth itſelf, will not fail in one word which he hath promiſed unto his own choſen ones, but whatever he hath promiſed ſhall in due time be accompliſhed, ſeeing he is God *who changeth not*, Numb. xxiii. 19. Rom. xi. 29. James i. 17. and is fully able to make good all his words; therefore this ſhould ſtand as an unmoveable rock, that it is impoſſible that the word of God ſhould take none effect, as ſome read theſe words, *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.*

VIII. Whatever truth be delivered by us, we ſhould by any means take heed that, in the leaſt appearance, it do not rub on God's glory, or give any occaſion to think ſiniſtrouſly thereof: God's glory ſhould be ſo dear to us, that we ſhould by all means guard againſt what may ſeem to give ground to any to ſpeak againſt it: therefore the apoſtle ſpeaks to this objection in the firſt place, and is ſo full in the clearing of it, and vindicating God's fidelity and conſtancy, ſaying, *Not as though the word of God had taken none effect. For they are not all Iſrael, which are of Iſrael.*

VERSES 7. 8. 9. *Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called. That is, They which are the children of the fleſh, theſe are not the children of God: but the children of the promiſe are counted for the ſeed.*

For this is the word of promiſe, At this time will I come, and Sara ſhall have a ſon.

THE next argument, whereby the apoſtle proveth, that notwithstanding of the rejection of the moſt part of the

Jews, yet the ſpecial promiſes of God did not fail, is here in theſe verſes. They might have ſaid, How can that be, that alſo are not Iſrael, who are of Iſrael, and theſe ſpecial promiſes do not belong unto all the poſterity of Jacob? Was not the covenant made with Abraham? and did not God ſay to him, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed after thee?* Now we are the ſeed of Abraham, and therefore the promiſes made to him, being made to him as the head of the family, do belong to us; and ſo it will yet follow, that if we be caſt off, his promiſes have failed: therefore he addeth, *Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, are they all children*; as if he had ſaid, You think becauſe you are lineally deſcended of Abraham, and ſo are externally in covenant, that therefore you have right to all the ſpecial and ſpiritual promiſes in the covenant; but this is your miſtake again, for all thoſe who are the carnal iſſue of Abraham are not the children to whom theſe promiſes do belong; intereſt in theſe ſpecial promiſes doth not ariſe from this external relation unto Abraham: and this he clearerh from the example of Iſaac and Iſhmael that did firſt ſpring out of Abraham's loins. Though Iſhmael was nearer to Abraham than you are, being his firſt-born, yet he had no intereſt in theſe ſpecial promiſes, and therefore all that are carnally deſcended of Abraham are not ſimply upon that ſcore heirs of theſe promiſes; and therefore you that are farther off from Abraham than Iſhmael was, can far leſs challenge ſuch an intereſt, upon this ſcore. Now that it was thus he proveth out of Genesis, mentioning two ſcriptures, recorded in the ſtory of Abraham, verſes 7. and 9. The firſt is that which is ſet down, Gen xxi. 12. *In Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called*: In which the Lord declared, that altho' Iſhmael was his ſeed, yet the covenant in its ſpecial mercies ſhould not run down that line, but Iſaac's line; he ſhould be his heir, and only heir, in theſe prime promiſes: and this doth

doth abundantly clear, that it doth not follow, that because they are the seed of Abraham they are all children. God of his own good pleasure made choice of Isaac, and rejected Ishmael, and made the spiritual promises to the one and not to the other; and so tho' the one, and his issue also, was rejected and put from the inheritance, it doth not follow, that the word of the Lord failed, seeing there was another line in whom it was verified; and so neither will it follow, tho' now the most part of the Jews are rejected, that therefore the word of God is of none effect, seeing there are some left, according to the election of grace, to whom these promises shall have effect. But then because they might have said, Well then that makes for us, for we belong not to the offspring of Ishmael, but are of the stock and lineage of Isaac, in whom Abraham's seed were called: therefore he added, in the 8th verse, *That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed*: As if he had, When the Lord said, *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*, he did not signify his mind to be, that all the carnal and natural issue of Isaac should be served heirs to the same spiritual promises with himself, and none should be excluded from these special promises, except the generation of Ishmael; but, would he say, there is some further mystery in the business; and if we will more narrowly consider the story, there will be another thing found out, and we may draw another purpose out of these words, *viz.* that it is not the carnal issue of Isaac that can claim any just title to these special promises, but such as are adopted as Isaac was, for *they which are the children of the flesh*, that is, begotten in a carnal and natural manner, *these are not the children of God*; these are not the persons to whom God hath freely made these gracious promises, *but the children of the promise*; that is, such as God has out of his free grace set his love upon, and chosen

to himself as his own, as he did Isaac: *these are counted for the seed*; these are the proper heirs of these promises who are selected, chosen, and set apart as Isaac was. And therefore, verse 9. he citeth that promise which God made unto Abraham concerning Isaac, Gen. xviii. 10. in the same sense, with a little variation of the words, *At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son*; citing only what made for his purpose.

So then albeit the children of the promise be such as indeed in due time do believe in Christ, and accept of that way of salvation through him, and many of the children of the flesh, such as do indeed flee to their own works, and reject the right way of salvation; yet it is a mistake to think that this is all that is here to be understood, because then the story concerning Isaac had not been appositely brought in; for altho' it be true, that Isaac was one who had fled in to the promised Messiah, and so gripped the promise, yet this cannot be the ground why he is here brought in as a child of the promise, and made as it were a type of such, in regard that there is a far other ground given by the apostle here, *viz.* the promise made to Abraham concerning him, and so he was a child of promise; because when there was no appearance that Abraham should have a son of Sarah, the Lord made him a free promise, that Sarah should conceive a son, and this son should be heir: and so he is rather a fit type (if so be he must be a type) of such particular individual persons, on whom God has set his affection before all time, and made heirs of such special promises as should certainly be accomplished, and that as distinguished from the rest, even though enjoying never so many external privileges, as church members and external covenanters.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As the Lord hath, in his deep wisdom, set down his mind in his word, after various

various manners, ſometimes by ſetting down hiſtories, and ſometimes by prophecies, and ſometimes by ſpecial directions, &c. ſo there is no part in his word, but is able to yield us abundant matter of inſtruction, and is uſeful, (as is the whole, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 17.) for that end; for here the apoſtle makes uſe of an hiſtorical part for confirming of truth, ſaying, *But in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called.*

II. Such is the unſpeakable riches of this mine, that tho' it be dangerous and unwarrantable for us to make uſe of any of his word as typical or allegorical, according to our frothy conceits, except where the Spirit of the Lord doth warrant us, and cuteth out our way, as Gal. iv. 24. yet there is much more in it than we can readily perceive at the firſt view, which would require diligent and painful ſtudy, with humble and cloſe dependence on the Fountain of light; for out of theſe words, *In Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called; and at this will I come, and Sarah ſhall have a ſon,* we ſee what the apoſtle doth gather and conclude.

III. So pure and unmixed is this word of truth, that there is nothing which can but be gathered from it by juſt and neceſſary conſequence, but it is undoubted truth alſo; for this place made uſe of by the apoſtle will not prove his purpoſe in ſo many words, but only by juſt and neceſſary conſequence: *In Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called; and this is the word of promiſe.*

IV. As always we ſhould, after the example of the apoſtle, confirm what truths we deliver unto people by the word of the Lord, wherewith only a conſcience will reſt ſatisfied; and ſhould be loth to vent the imaginations of our own brain, and father it upon the Lord as his mind; ſo eſpecially, when we are looſing the grips of carnal preſumptuous perſons from the promiſes of ſpecial note, which they are ſo loth to part with, and diſcovering the vanity of their preſumptuous conceits, and the ſandineſs of the ground they build up-

on, leſt otherways all that we can ſay prove uſeleſs; as the apoſtle doth here.

V. Tho' the children of ſuch as are within the viſible church, and in covenant with God, are advanced to greater privileges than the children of ſuch as are *aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael*, Acts ii. 39. yet it will not avail a man to ſalvation, that he is ſprung out of the loins of ſuch or ſuch godly parents; godly parents may have ungodly iſſue: *Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham are they all children.*

VI. The Lord, *who ſeeth not as man ſeeth*, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. in his making choice of any nation or perſon before another, hath not reſpect unto their carnal prerogatives, or any ſuch dignities, but preferreth whom he will, of his own good pleaſure, without reſpect had to any excellence or worth in the one beyond the other: therefore ſays he, *Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called.* See 1 Cor. i. 26. 27.

VII. Albeit the miniſters of the goſpel be allowed and commanded to preach Chriſt, and to make offer of all the ſpecial promiſes in Chriſt, unto all within the viſible church, upon condition they will be accepted; yet in the Lord's hid and ſecret intention, theſe belong only to his choſen generation: and yet we muſt not think that the Lord is mocking the reſt unto whom he is making the offers; but rather, by holding out the promiſes unto them upon the ſame terms as he doth to others, they may be convinced of their impotence, which was ſinfully contracted, and wherein they have complacency, and ſo of God's juſtice in condemning them. This ground the apoſtle walks on, when he ſays, *Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, are they all children,* and therefore theſe prime promiſes do not pertain to them; *but the children of the promiſe are counted for the ſeed.*

VIII. So ready are folks to deceive
Y y them

themselves with vain imaginations, that it is a matter of no small difficulty to get such as are honoured with external church privileges, thoroughly convinced of a necessity of having some thing besides these to look to for salvation; and therefore the apostle must come over it again, and tell them, that *they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.*

IX. Let folks dote upon outward privileges as they please, yet it will still be found a truth, that none shall ever be accounted by the Lord as his true sons and daughters, and heirs of glory, but such as the Lord did from eternity set his affection upon, and accordingly in time beget them unto a new life, by the promises of the gospel, offered, and laid hold on by faith; for *the children of the promise are only counted for the seed.*

VERSES 10. 11. 12. 13. *And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac,*

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth)

It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

IN these verses the apostle is prosecuting his former purpose with a new argument; and as he cleared his point, and shewed, that although at this time many of the Jews were rejected, yet God's special promises were still fulfilled, there being some particular persons peculiarly selected, and chosen of God, unto whom they were made, and will undoubtedly be accomplished, both in Abraham's family and in Jacob's; so now he clearerth the same in Isaac's family; and from thence he bringeth a stronger argument: and therefore says he, *Not only this; not only will*

this example, brought out of Abraham's family, prove the point, but also, *when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, &c.* in Isaac's family we will find another example, against which there can be no just exception: For, 1. whereas some might say, It was no wonder that Isaac was preferred before Ishmael, seeing Ishmael was the son of Hagar an Egyptian, one of a cursed kind, and a bond-woman too, Gen. xvi. 1. 2. and so no lawful wife to Abraham; but Sarah was his lawful wife, and Isaac his lawfully begotten son. In this example, this exception is taken away, for Jacob and Esau are both lawfully begotten by Isaac, and that upon his lawful wife, who was mother to them both, even Rebecca, a free woman, and a pious, modest, and grave matron; and yet it was said to her, *The elder shall serve the younger.* 2. Some might say, There was good reason why the Lord should have made choice of Isaac, and not of Ishmael, because Ishmael was a wicked profane person, and a mocker; therefore this is helped in this example: for this difference was made by God, not for any thing of that kind, but before they were born; and so there was nothing in the one or the other to have moved God to have preferred the one to the other, and made any choice but as he pleased; for not only were they alike as to their very conception, being twins, but *the children being not yet born,---it was said to her, The elder shall serve the younger; even though they had done neither good nor evil, nothing either meriting election, nor procuring rejection.* And again, 3. some might alledge, That which the Lord said to Rebecca, *viz. The elder shall serve the younger,* should be understood only of external slavery; and so the meaning should be, that the posterity of Esau should become slaves unto the posterity of Jacob, according as it was fulfilled in David's days, 2 Sam. viii. 14. who subdued the Edomites, and they were still kept in bondage until the days of Joram, 2 Kin. s

viii. 20. He cleareth the meaning to be otherways, and that theſe words do import another thing than Eſau's fervitude to Jacob, or his loſs of the birth-right, or yet his loſs of his heirſhip of the promiſed land; even that they held forth his loſs of the kingdom of heaven, whereof Canaan was a type, and his excluſion from the bleſſing and the covenant, and that in God's everlaſting purpoſe and decree; and for this cauſe he cites a paſſage out of Malachi, chapter i. 2. 3. ſaying, *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, and Eſau have I hated:* whereby he cleareth, that the dominion of the younger over the elder flowed from love and good-will, and that the ſubjection of the elder to the younger flowed from hatred; and thus did clearly prove election of the one, and reprobation of the other. In the place cited, the prophet is chiding with his people for their ingratitude, and for this cauſe is manifeſting his great love towards them, in chooſing their father Jacob, as the root out of whom the church ſhould ſpring, leaving Eſau, his elder brother, and his poſterity, into a ſtate without the pale of the church; giving to Jacob their father, and to his poſterity, the land of Canaan, which was a type of heaven, as a ſpecial ſign of his favour; and to Iſhmael, and his poſterity, a mountainous, barren country, as a ſign of his diſreſpect and hatred of them: and ſo the prophet cannot be underſtood as ſpeaking only of temporal bleſſings and curſes, but alſo of the riſe and root of both, *viz.* his eternal love and hatred, electing the one and reprobating the other; beſide, that to be taken in as God's people, and to be rejected as not his, are not temporal mercies. But, however, tho' we ſhould look upon both the paſſages as holding forth temporal bleſſings allenarly, they would ſtrongly, *a fortiori*, confirm the apoſtle's theſis, and prove, that the Lord preferred Jacob before Eſau in his love, without any reſpect had to the goodneſs of the one, or the

evil of the other; for ſeeing without any ſuch reſpect had to their doing good or evil, he had, before they were born, allotted good things to the one, and evil things to the other, much more may he allot life to the one, and death to the other, without any reſpect had to their goodneſs or evil, as moving God to do ſo.

Finally, there is ſomething added in the end of the 11th verſe which ſerveth to clear this buſineſs more, in theſe words, *that the purpoſe of God, according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth:* He made choice of Jacob and rejected Eſau long before they were born, even from eternity, and not for their works good or evil, either done or foreſeen; for before they had done either good or evil, he preferred the one to the other, that his purpoſe, decree, and reſolution, whereby he chooſeth ſome, leaving others, might be fixed, conſtant, and permanent, and not fluctuating or changeable, according to the various ups and downs of fickle man; and therefore it is *not of works*, nor becauſe of works, *but of him that calleth;* that is, which floweth allenarly from the good-pleaſure of him who in due time puteth the ſame in execution, effectually calling them whom he hath foreordained unto life; and it was ſaid to her, that his purpoſe might appear to be firm and fixed, &c.

Hence alſo it appeareth, how groundleſs that fore-mentioned expoſition of the Arminians is, that ſay, that all which the apoſtle ſaith here, is only to prove, that God hath purpoſed to ſave all believers in Chriſt, who are typified by Jacob, and to condemn or reject all ſuch as ſeek righteouſneſs by the works of the law, who are typified by Eſau, from theſe two teſtimonies. For,

1ſt, It makes Jacob and Eſau ſuch types, without any warrant from the word, leſs or more; and to ſay, that it is confirmed by theſe words, *that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works,*

works, but of him that calleth, is, to speak at random; for any words may prove it as well as these.

2dly, It says, that all that perish are such as seek righteousness by the works of the law; but I believe many go to hell who were never such zealots; many being altogether ignorant of the law, and many who know the law being so flagitious and dissolute, as that they seem careless altogether of salvation.

3dly, There can no agreement be imagined betwixt the type and the antitype; especially if we consider, how the supposed types are held forth by the apostle.

4thly, By this exposition the apostle's way of arguing will be found impertinent; for, as we shewed before, and is granted by them, the apostle here in this argument is obviating what they might have excepted against the last, and therefore he says, that Jacob and Esau had the same parents, and so were not as Isaac and Ishmael, and that this was said of them before they had done either good or evil; all which had been impertinent, if this exposition of theirs hold. For, if the apostle's scope and arguments had been to confirm this, that God had resolved to condemn such as seek life by the law, and to save such as seek it by faith, how could the apostle imagine that the Jews would have had any ground to have excepted against his former argument, upon this score, that there was some disparity already betwixt Isaac and Ishmael, and so some ground why the one should have been preferred to the other? for the ground of that objection would abundantly confirm this exposition, tho' there were no more *viz.* that Ishmael was rejected, because he declared himself an unbeliever by mocking; and the other, *viz.* that he was born of Hagar, would yield no ground of an objection: For what colour of reason were there in this, to say, It is no wonder that God took this way of saving believers, and rejecting unbelievers, or such as seek righteousness by the law, for Ishmael was

born of a bond woman, and Isaac of a free woman? for be they born of a bond woman, or of a free woman, all is one matter, if they believe, it is well; if they seek righteousness by the law, they are gone. And so according to this exposition, it was altogether groundless for the apostle to have used this gradation, and according to his usual manner expressed it thus; *Not only this, but when, &c.* yea, and needless to have said, as he saith, verses 10. 11. *When Rebecca also had conceived by one; and again, the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil.* But,

5thly, If this interpretation hold, I cannot imagine to what purpose the apostle should have said, *the children being not yet born, neither having done either good or evil*; for these words contribute nothing to this purpose, but do point forth clearly an equality betwixt two persons, notwithstanding whereof one was preferred before the other: and what saith this to the Lord's purpose of saving believers, and damning justiciaries? Sure there is no equality betwixt believers and such.

6thly, It is true the Lord saves such as believe, and damnth justiciaries; and also hath resolved and purposed with himself to do so; but as there was no necessity here for the apostle to confirm this, so neither doth he it, but is speaking of the event of particular persons, and therefore says he, *The children having not done either good or evil; and it was said unto her, &c.* He is not speaking of such or such a people under types, for there can be no reason conceived why he did so; and it had been easier, and more for their conviction and edification, to have spoken clearly without types.

7thly, If this exposition hold, the apostle's citations should be altogether impertinent: For, 1. this, that *the elder shall serve the younger*, can make nothing to the purpose; for (1.) sure in that place of Genesis there is no such thing hinted at, but only a prophecy of the Lord's preferring the younger

younger to the elder, and that notwithstanding that there was nothing in the younger deserving this. And (2.) how can this follow, by good consequence, from the place? Is there any shew of reason here, It was said to Rebecca when the twins struggled in her womb, that the elder should serve the younger, therefore God will save believers, and damn such as seek life by the law? 2. And as for the other place it would be as far from the purpose; for (1.) sure there is no colour of reason to imagine that the prophet is there speaking of such distinct conditions of people, as the scope of the place will easily clear. (2.) He is not speaking of actual damning and saving such or such sort of persons, or of his purpose to do so, but of love and hatred, which is a far distinct thing; for *love* and *hatred* here, are not taken for the actual expression thereof to the saved or damned, but for something previous to their actual salvation or damnation; and therefore it is said in the preterite time, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.* 3. What consequence is this, I have loved Jacob, therefore I will save believers; and I have hated Esau, therefore I will damn all such as seek life by the law?

8thly, This exposition will cross the very propriety of the words set down, verse 11. especially as they are taken in scripture. For 1. that word, *purpose*, is no where taken in this sense, for the enacting of a law, but for his decree, and the good pleasure of his will, as we see, Rom. viii. 28. Eph. i. 9. 11. And 2. *election*, or *purpose according to election*, should have no sense in this interpretation: For, (1.) *election* ordinarily signifieth, the Lord's everlasting purpose of saving such and such particular persons, and not others; or the actual separation, by effectual calling, of such from the rest of the world, as 1 Cor. i. 27. but never for actual glorification, as it must be taken in this exposition. (2.) Election is always of particular individual persons. (3.) Election here must be taken for an act

of God, preceding folks believing or not believing, for it is before the children were born, or had done either good or evil: but *their* election is after folks do actually believe. (4.) By their exposition, there might be no election at all; (and yet the apostle says, that the purpose of God according to election must stand firm) for there can be no election where there are not some taken and some left; but by their way it might come to pass, that all should believe, or none should believe; for, say they, God hath decreed nothing to the contrary, but left all free to man's will. 3. *But of him that calleth*, must, by this interpretation, be as uncouthly expounded as any; for they take the meaning of them to be, *by faith*: What strange liberty is this in expounding scripture, to say, that *of him that calleth*, is, *of faith*! and how wonderful is it, that they say this without any shew of reason!

9thly, Yea, in a word, this exposition of theirs should contradict the apostle to his face; for the apostle saith, that election is not of works, and that the Lord loved Jacob and hated Esau, before they had done either good or evil; that is, he purposed to save Jacob and to condemn Esau, when neither of them had done good nor evil, or done any thing that might have procured love or hatred. But they say, whom he decreed and predestinated to life, he considered as believing; and why not also as obeying? and the rest as not believing, but seeking righteousness by the works of the law; and so certainly election must be of works; yea, and then election must be of men and women born and doing good, yea, and dying; for if faith be considered, why not also perseverance in faith? But the apostle speaks of election here, as going before the birth of the children, and long before they did either good or evil.

10thly, Also by this exposition, the apostle should be doing nothing else in this place, but proving what he had fully enough

nough cleared and proved before, viz. that salvation is not had by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ; and so the apostle should be obscuring, by dark and obscure handling, what was abundantly cleared before: But sure the apostle will be found to handle a new purpose, if we consider how he begins this chapter with an uncouth preface, a strong apology, and vindication, by a great oath, and other circumstances, there most obvious.

11thly, The whole manner of the apostle's handling of this purpose, doth clearly hold forth that he is treating about a most profound business, which carnal reason cannot reach; yea, and which putteth the apostle himself to astonishment: But to say, that God will save believers and damn unbelievers, is a business which any Christian can reach.

12thly, Finally, If we thus expone the words, we must indeed say, that the apostle is spending much labour in vain, which were blasphemy; for then we should look upon him as endeavouring with great pains to prove that which none denied, viz. That God's general decree of saving believers, and damning justiciaries, doth not depend upon mens works: for he says, *That the purpose of God according to election* (by which they understand this general decree) *might stand, not of works, &c.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. This doctrine of election and reprobation, though a mystery in itself, and a profound point, which carnal reason cannot reach or thoroughly sound, and such a doctrine as proud ignorant souls will be ready to abuse to their own loss; yet seeing the Lord hath thought it fit to make several times mention thereof in his word, it were unfaithfulness in ministers, and needless scrupulosity in Christians, to forbear the mentioning and studying of it; it being not only lawful, but also edifying, to mention the same warily, prudently,

and soberly, as the apostle's practice sheweth here, who speaketh of it at large.

II. As the studying of this doctrine is useful for grounding believers in the truth of the certainty of their salvation, Rom. viii. 29. 30. and for stirring up of believers unto a christian walk, 2 Pet. i. 10. and encouraging them against crosses, as Rom. viii. 38. 39.; so is it useful for clearing the nature of the promises, and vindicating the justice and faithfulness of God; as here it is used by the apostle for this end.

III. In handling of this mysterious point, we should all along keep ourselves close by the word of God, which is only able to clear us; this being a business in which carnal reason cannot see far: therefore the apostle hath all alongst proved his point by scripture, bringing in scripture-examples, and at length saying, *As it is written, &c.*

IV. In searching out God's mind in his word, there is great diligence and accuracy required, not only in searching any part thereof thoroughly, but also in comparing one place with another, that we may thereby find out the whole meaning of the Spirit of God, which speaketh to us there; the wisdom of God thinking it fit to set down his mind by parcels, as it were, part of it here, and part of it there, that we may search with diligence, and compare spiritual things with spiritual: for so doth the apostle here, after he had cited some words out of Genesis, which did not fully enough clear the point, he brings another place out of Malachi, the more to confirm the matter; saying, *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.*

V. Seeing the Spirit of God is a Spirit of truth, always speaking truth; whatever gloss we put upon a place, must not be taken for the meaning of the Spirit, unless it be such as may be confirmed by other places: for the apostle sheweth that these words, *The elder shall serve the younger*, hold forth election and reprobation, by

by bringing in these words out of Malachi, *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, to confirm his gloss.

VI. There is no man on earth whose judgment we must follow, as the only rule of interpreting of scripture; but the Spirit of God speaking in the scriptures, is the only rule; and therefore scripture can only interpret scripture, and we must expone darker places by places which are more full and clear, after the example of the apostle, who explains what he meaneth by that dark place cited out of Genesis, by that clearer, *Jacob have I loved, &c.*

VII. So rich a treasure is the word, that not only are the truths therein held forth profitable for instruction and admonition, &c. but also the very circumstances are significant, as the time when such and such a thing was said, and useful for the more full clearing of the mind of the Lord; which should call us to more exact study of the scriptures, and such useful circumstances: for we see the apostle lays much weight upon the time when it was said, *The elder shall serve the younger*, viz. before they were born; and therefore says, *The children being not yet born. &c.*

VIII. Carnal reason being enmity against God, Rom. viii 7. and all his ways, cannot be soon captivated by the truth, nor will not be soon convinced of it; and therefore there must be line upon line, and one instance upon the back of another: therefore says he, *And not only this, but when, &c.*

IX. The Lord Jehovah, the great Creator of heaven and earth, is sovereign Lord and absolute Disposer of all his creatures, and hath absolute power to dispose of them both as to soul and body as he pleaseth, all being his handy-work: for here, *he loveth Jacob, and hates Esau*, and makes the elder serve the younger, and all according to his *own purpose*, which is elsewhere called *the good pleasure of his will*, Eph. i. 5.

X. God by an everlasting decree, hath separated some of mankind from the rest,

appointing them to everlasting life, for the glory of his free grace, and so makes choice of some, as he thinketh fit, leaving the rest, and hath no way designed all to life; for here is mention made of *election*, (which always importeth the taking of some, and leaving of others) and the *elder* is made to serve the *younger*; and *Jacob* is *loved*, and not *Esau*. See John vi. 37. Rev. xx. 15.

XI. All these whom God hath set his love on; from eternity, are individually and particularly condescended on, and known to the Lord, 2 Tim. ii. 19.: for *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*; they are particularly pitched on.

XII. This decree by which some are predestinate to life, and others to death, is not pendulous or conditional, depending upon something in man; such a decree being unsuitable for him who is altogether perfect, as being no act of his will at all; so that the decree cannot be conceived to be this general confused act, I will save such and such if they believe; but this absolute particular act, I will save such and such particular persons: therefore we hear, that he *loved Jacob*, and there is no condition mentioned; and *before the children were born, or had done either good or evil, it was absolutely said, the elder shall serve the younger.*

XIII. As this decree of predestination in God, is peremptory and particular, so is it permanent and immutable; his will is stable and unchangeable, so that whom he loveth, he loveth to the end; seeing there can nothing fall out in time, but what he hath decreed shall fall out, and so hath clearly foreseen; nor can there any thing be able to hinder him from effectuating what he purposeth; and therefore his purposes are not as man's, who can neither foresee events, nor resist all occurrences which vary every day: therefore it is said, *I hat the purpose of God according to election might stand*; hence we hear of their names being written in a book, Phil. iv. 3. Rev. xxi. 27. Luke x. 20.

XIV. Those whom God did predestinate unto life, were not considered by him, when he did choose and elect them, as believing in Christ, and persevering therein to the end, otherways there could none be said to be elected while they live; contrary to Matth. xx. 16. xxii. 14. and xxiv. 22. 24. Rom. xi. 5. Eph. i. 4. 11. John xiii. 18. for here, *before the children were born*, (and so before they could believe) the one was chosen, and *Jacob was loved*, and preferred to the other.

XV. Albeit all these whom the Lord hath chosen unto life, shall in due time believe; faith flowing from election, as a fruit thereof, Acts xiii. 48. Rom. viii. 29. Eph. i. 14. 15. John vi. 37. x. 20. and viii. 47. and such only who do or will believe, are chosen of God, James ii. 5. this being the mean to the end, 2 Thes. ii. 13. God purposing to save none but such as do believe; yet faith foreseen was not the cause moving God to make choice of one before another, seeing he could foresee nothing in the creature but what he had decreed to bestow, and faith is his gift, and a mean appointed for the end; and man doth not first make choice of God, John xv. 16. Rom. vi. 35. as of necessity it would follow, if because of faith, which is a choosing of God, he made choice of us: for it is here said, *That before the children were born, or had done any good, It was said to her, the elder shall serve the younger; and Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*; where the apostle puts Jacob and Esau in a like condition; and so foreseen faith in the one could not be the cause why he was chosen, and not the other.

XVI. Though without holiness no man shall see God, this being the way whereby the Lord bringeth his chosen ones to glory; yet the Lord hath elected none to life for foreseen good works, seeing many acts of God which are done in time, are not because of works, Tit. iii. 5. but as he hath elected them to life, so to the means, such

as holiness, or sanctification, leading thereto, 2 Thes. ii. 13. for *the purpose of God according to election---is not of works: And before the children had done good---it was said to her, the elder shall serve the younger.*

XVII. As God hath decreed, according to his good pleasure, that some shall certainly enjoy heaven and happiness; so hath he by his decree, appointed the rest unto destruction, and hath passed them by and reprobated them, for the glory of his own name; and therefore, according to his own good pleasure, he denieth them the means whereby others are brought to glory, John x. 26. Psal. cxlvii. 20. and such a thing is actually brought about, Matth. xxv. 32. 41. 46. and faith is denied to them, Matth. xiii. 11. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 39. Acts xxviii. 26. 27.; and it is clear from the nature of election, which excludeth some, John xv. 19. and xvii. 9. 1 Cor. i. 26. 27. and iv. 7. Deut. vii. 7.; and moreover it is clear hence, that *the elder is said to serve the younger*, and *Esau is said to be hated*.

XVIII. This act of God, reprobating some, is not purely negative, as if there were no more in it but God's simple passing them by, and not choosing of them; but there is an affirmative and positive act, it being an act of God's will ordaining them to destruction and eternal death so and so: and therefore the apostle expresses the same further by some affirmative and positive expressions; saying, *The elder shall serve the younger*, and *Esau have I hated*.

XIX. This act of reprobation is not general and confused, but peremptory and particular; the very persons who are reprobated being particularly condescended on by the Lord: therefore says he, *Esau have I hated*.

XX. Tho' none shall be actually damned, and cast into hell, but sinners, and such as deserve the same in justice; and the Lord hath decreed that it should be so; yet it is not the evil deeds of such as perish, either existing, or foreseen, which at first moved God to reprobate such,

ſuch, ſeeing it is his decree which is his will, and ſo himſelf, and therefore can have no cauſe preceding: for here, *Before that Eſau had done any evil, it was ſaid, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger; and Eſau have I hated.*

XXI. All that which moved God to elect ſome to life, and appoint the reſt to death, was only in himſelf and nothing elſe; his own good pleaſure; and therefore, *the purpoſe of God according to election is of him that calleth*, otherways grace in God ſhould not be the higheſt cauſe of all good: See Eph. i. 5.

XXII. Election, in God, is moſt ſure, and cannot be hemed in with any external qualification or privilege in its object: even the law of nature cannot bound it; for though by the law of nature the eldeſt ſhould be preferred, yet electing love can make the elder to ſerve the younger, and can pitch upon Jacob, and miſken Eſau: *The elder ſhall ſerve the younger. &c.* See 1 Cor. i. 26. 27.

XXIII. Tho' God hath abſolutely elected ſome to everlaſting life; yet hath he not purpoſed to bring them to the actual poſſeſſion of it, but by ſuch and ſuch means as he hath appointed; for he hath abſolutely, that is, without any condition, required or perceived to be in man, appointed both the end, and the means leading to the end: therefore it is added, *of him that calleth*, to put us in mind that effectual calling intervenes betwixt election and the poſſeſſion of what they are choſen to.

XXIV. The Lord not only hath choſen his own to glory; but, that man's mouth may be ſtoped, and God may get the whole praiſe of the work, it is he alone that carrieth it on effectually, and leadeſh his elect toward the end thro' the means; therefore he is ſtiled, *him that calleth*: this is his work, to call effectually, to give faith, and ſo carry them on towards the end.

XXV. As the making of the act of election to depend upon faith or good

works foreſeen, is enough to make the decree uncertain and unſtable; ſo the conſideration of this, that God was moved to elect, by nothing, leſs or more, in man, but merely of his own good pleaſure, ſhould abundantly confirm us of the fixedneſs of his decree: And the conſideration of this, that it is he who doth execute his own decrees, and bringeth about the means for the ſame, ſhould perſuade us, that his purpoſes ſhall not fail, but whatever he hath decreed ſhall come to paſs: for ſays he, *That the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth.*

XXVI. The only ſpring and well-head of all the good things which come to us, here or hereafter, is only the undeſerved, free, and matchleſs love of God: for his decree of election is called love; *Jacob have I loved.*

XXVII. Albeit the Lord, who is perfect in wiſdom and knowledge, knowing all things at once, needeth not uſe any deliberation or conſultation before hand, (which always floweth from ignorance) when he is about to decree any thing; yet all his decrees are done in wiſdom and righteouſneſs: therefore his decree is here called his purpoſe; *that the purpoſe of God; he decerneth what he decerneth, wittingly and willingly.*

VERSES 14. 15. 16. *What ſhall we ſay then? Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid.*

For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion.

So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.

A According to the apoſtle's uſual manner, when he is handling any ſublime and myſterious point of religion, finding it no eaſy matter to get ſuch truths digeſt-

ed in mens minds, as always, so here, he is necessitated to meet with what absurdities carnal reason can muster up against the truths delivered: and especially this doctrine of predestination being such a labyrinth, out of which carnal reason cannot soon extricate itself; but the more it labour-eth to win out, the more it is drowned and entangled; the apostle seeth it necessary to answer, what the wit of man could soon find at hand to object against what he had said before. Here then, the apostle proposeth an objection in these words, *What shall we say then?* as in the same words he did before, Chapter iii. 5. the ground of it seemeth to lie in the words preceding, as is evident by the illative particle *then*; which appeareth clearly to be this, as if they had said, Seeing you say, that God had a purpose of love, and so elected some to everlasting life, appointing the rest unto death and destruction, and that, while there was nothing in the one nor in the other to have moved him either to have had thoughts of good or evil towards them; *The children being not yet born, nor having done good or evil*, the one was chosen, and the other was rejected, the one loved, and the other hated; and also, seeing you have said, that the purpose of God is not of works, but of him that calleth; and so the Lord electeth none for their good deeds, existent or foreseen; nor doth he reprobate any for their evil deeds, existent or foreseen: Now if this be true, God should not deal righteously with men and women; it seemeth to be unjust dealing, to deal so differently with such as are every way alike; to appoint such to heaven as no way deserve it, and such to hell who are not considered as deserving it either; *Is there unrighteousness with God?* To which objection the apostle answereth two ways; 1. By abhorring and detesting the consequence, *God forbid*: such unfavoury and blasphemous conclusions cannot follow from such true premises; such inferences should be abhorred. And, 2. lest corrupt reason

should vaunt and boast, he lays down some grounds which, in reason, may satisfy in this profound point. The sum of his answer may be taken up thus; God's electing and reprobating floweth from his mere sovereignty and good pleasure; he is the supreme fountain of all being, and the absolute disposer of all things according to the good-pleasure of his own will: Ask what cause we will in this business, we can rise no higher than this, So it seemeth good in his eyes; it is his will to do so: and whatever is his will to do, that is right; he is a God who is altogether just and righteous, and willeth nothing but what is so: and tho' we cannot see, thro' our short-sightedness, how that what he doth can agree with justice; yet we must conclude, that assuredly it doth so, if once we know that he doth or willeth such a thing. Now, that, in this mystery of predestination, he walketh according to his absolute sovereignty, the apostle proveth, by shewing, how in such acts as are more obvious, and belong to the execution of these everlasting decrees of his, and so are more easily understood by us, he walketh according to his absolute will, and to his own good pleasure, and is not bound by any laws which corrupt reason would carve out, and lay before him; and so sheweth, that as in these acts which are done in time, he walketh in a majestic manner, according to his own pleasure; and yet none can blame him in any of these acts, as being unjust; so much more, doth he follow a transcendent path of supreme unlimited sovereignty in his eternal acts: The consequence is undeniable, and therefore the apostle passeth it, and only clear-eth, how the supreme cause of what he doth in time, in reference to his carrying on of some to life, and of others to death, is in his absolute will and pleasure. And for this cause he clear-eth the matter out of God's word, as that which must satisfy the conscience; and be a rule to direct our judgments in this mystery.

And therefore he bringeth two places of scripture, the one serving to clear God in election, the other serving to clear him as to reprobation; and from both these he draweth his conclusion. The first is out of Exod. xxxiii. 19. and the words are these; *He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion*; as if the apostle had said, You see, how in the first breaking up of this everlasting love in time, God is absolute and free, and there is nothing of this kind deserved of man; he hath mercy on whom he will, his free good pleasure is the spring and fountain cause of all; and so by *having mercy and compassion* here, is not meant, God's everlasting act of election, predestinating some to life eternal; for to have mercy and compassion doth always presuppose misery: but God's act of predestination doth not so; for some angels were predestinated, who could not be considered as miserable: and if God's act predestinating men must presuppose this, then it must presuppose all that misery to which mercy useth to be extended; and so whom God electeth must be considered, not only as guilty of Adam's sin, but as lying under all their actual transgressions; and so they and the reprobate should not be alike, yea, nor yet the elect themselves, some being guilty of more than others, when God electeth them. And thus in time, only according to his free pleasure, he brings some out of the gulph of sin and misery, by calling them effectually, and blessing them with faith, &c. which is a wonderful act of mercy indeed. The other word rendered *compassion*, signifieth, *to love entirely, tenderly, affectionately, and to love with pity and compassion, as mothers do the fruit of their womb*, Isa. xlix. 15. *to have bowels of mercy towards any, and bowels yearning for any*, both in Hebrew and Greek. And then concludeth, verse 16. *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runeth, but of God that sheweth mercy*;

that is, The cause why God maketh choice of one before another, is nothing in man, nothing seen in his inclination, disposition, or intentions, or any innate power in man to do good: *It is not of him that willeth*; man has no *liberum arbitrium*, having any influence in this; nor doth God see any thing in man's endeavours, pains and labours, which doth move him to elect them; *It is not of him that runeth*: but all the cause is in God only, all lieth in his own breast; *It is of God who sheweth mercy*.

For the further clearing of these and the following two verses, we must speak a little unto that sense which the Arminians put upon them, and see whether their exposition suiteth the apostle's words here better than before; and therefore we shall do these three things. 1. We shall shortly set down what they take to be the ground of the objection; or whence it riseth: for the objection itself is most clear. And 2. shew how far fetched this their ground is, and how little ground there is for it in the words. And, 3. how impertinently, if their opinion hold, the apostle will be found to argue. They lay down the ground of the objection thus; If God make choice of the children of the promise, that is, love the faithful; and reject the children of the flesh, that is, hate such as seek righteousness by the works of the law, and that out of his mere purpose; then God would seem to be unrighteous; for in the first covenant the Lord placed righteousness and life in obedience to the law; and now if he should condemn such as seek life by it, he should certainly seem unrighteous. Thus they take up the occasion or ground of the objection; and how erroneously, we shew thus; 1. By this means we must look upon the apostle as speaking of that which he is not speaking of at all. As (1.) That he is comparing the two covenants together; for which there is no real ground, nor any colour of ground, unless without any colour of reason we take Isaac and

Ishmael as types thereof; and though we should do this, yet we cannot find any shew of ground why to take Jacob and Esau as such. (2.) The apostle indeed in his former discourse speaks of works, but never a word of seeking righteousness and life by works. (3.) When the apostle speaks of works, it is always in opposition to God, and what he takes from them he gives to him: but by this opinion, what he takes from works he gives to faith. (4.) The apostle has not a word of faith, nor of seeking righteousness by faith. Yea, (5.) he is so far from taking in faith, when he lays works aside, that he excludes it no less than works; for he considereth Jacob and Esau, *not yet born*, and so as far from faith as from good works: he says not, *Not of works, but of faith*, but, *not of works, but of him that calleth*. 2. By this gloss we shall flatly contradict the apostle, yea, and make him to contradict himself; for it is most clear that he considereth Jacob and Esau as every way alike, when he saith, *The children were not yet born, neither had done good or evil*: but believers and unbelievers are not alike; sure believers and such as seek life by their believing, are inwardly renewed, and have the grace of God at their heart-roots. 3. I wonder what seeming ground any could have to propose such an objection as this? What shew of unrighteousness is there here, to love such as flee in to the righteousness of Christ; having none of their own wherewith to satisfy justice? and to cast such into hell who deserve it, and will not go out of themselves, to seek a price which will satisfy justice? And shall we think that the apostle would start objections which had no ground, and which no man could imagine? 4. And to say, that there is an apparent ground for this objection, seeing God once made a covenant in which righteousness and life was to be had by works, and now he debars such from life, who are seeking life that way, were to say somewhat, if, (1.) the apostle

had been speaking any thing of the covenant of works; but he is speaking of particular persons, and of particular persons every way alike; but none are in a like capacity to get life, either by the covenant of life, or by the covenant of grace. (2.) This were something, if, supposing it possible, that any now, since Adam's fall, were able to keep that covenant, God would not grant life to such, tho' they should fulfil the condition of that covenant in every point; but neither doth the apostle say this, nor is there ground for any to imagine it. 5. But, you will say, seemeth it not unrighteous to reject the Jews from life, who were seeking it by the righteousness of the law. I answer, To seek righteousness by the law is one thing, and to fulfil the law perfectly is another thing. It would indeed seem unrighteous to exclude such from life, that had perfectly kept the law; but there is no colour of injustice in excluding such as seek after it, but cannot win to it; now the Jews, whatever they endeavoured, yet never could keep this law perfectly, and so there could be no colour of injustice, in excluding them from life.

But, in the last place, let us consider the apostle's answer; according to their opinion, they take up his answer thus, verses 15. 16. This change of the covenant was not through God's fault, but man's, who brake the covenant; and seeing it was so that man brake that covenant, there could be no injustice in God to take a new way, in his free mercy, whereby to save some, and put what conditions in that covenant he pleaseth. But, 1. there is no word of a covenant here; nor 2. any word of a change of a covenant at all: and 3. this makes the main stress of the apostle's answer to lie in the word *mercy*, whereas it lieth in his *will*; he has *mercy on whom he will*. 4. What a far-fetched gloss is this, to say, *he hath mercy on whom he will*, that is, he makes what conditions in a new covenant he pleaseth? For, 5. thus *mercy* here spoken of should not reach

reach particular persons, but only such or such conditions. 6. And so that place out of Exodus should have been impertinently cited; for there sure the Lord is not speaking of making the conditions of a new covenant, but is pointing forth his great sovereignty in pardoning whom he thinketh fit, and executing justice upon others according to their demerits. 7. What an answer can this be to this doubt, How can God in justice deny life to such who seek it according to the first covenant? To say, he may well do it, because in his mercy he has fallen upon another way? Sure it seemeth not satisfactory, seeing still the doubt remaineth; for though he should fall upon twenty distinct ways, yet if he deny life to such as seek it the first way, he will still seem unjust. 8. And to say there was a necessity for this change, seeing the old covenant was broken, and it was impossible for man to get life thereby, is to say indeed the thing which is true; but (1.) we have no other ground for this here, but what we may gather from the word *mercy*. And (2.) shall we think that the apostle, who labours to satisfy consciences, would not have said so, if it had been to the purpose? sure it had been as soon said, and more apposite; yea, and far more intelligible, to have said, The Lord cannot be accounted unrighteous in this, because that covenant is broken, and so useless as to life. *Lastly*, Though, we should grant all this, yet the main doubt remains, How comes it to pass; that some take the new way to life, and so believe in Christ, and some not? According to their exposition there is not a word of this here; and yet the cause seems to be plainly held forth in these words, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*. And, to speak the truth, according to their opinion who make the prime cause to be man's will, it might have come to pass that all should have taken this new way, and there should have been no children of the flesh; but any bo-

dy may see how this crosseth the word of the Lord, who saith, *he has mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth*; which importeth clearly that he has not mercy on all, and that some are hardened.

But to proceed to the 16th verse, according to their sense the meaning must be this, if it have any argument with the preceeding verse; The covenant-making is not of man's will nor man's endeavour, but of God's mercy; and how foolish this is, appeareth of itself: Who could once think that man could alter the covenant? And if they say the meaning is, The way to heaven is not by man's doings, but by the new covenant, which mercy has found out, this were not to oppose man's doings to God, as if they stood not in opposition here, but man's doings unto the way by faith; and who can gather this new covenant out of these words, *but God who sheweth mercy*? However this cannot be looked on as any conclusion depending upon the former verse, if we understand it as they would have it understood; for he said before, *he would have mercy on whom he would have mercy*; that is, according to their sense, he takes what way in the new covenant he will; and so it will not follow from thence, that it might not be of him that willeth and runeth; for according to his good-pleasure that was the way before. Finally, what wildness is in this interpretation, to say the meaning is this; The way is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runeth, but of him that believeth, through the mercy of God! Is *of God who sheweth mercy*, all one with *of him that believeth through mercy*? Any body may thus pervert scripture who please.

From verse 14. OBSERVE,

I. Carnal reason cannot easily take up and understand the deep and profound mysteries of God, they do so far transcend the capacity and reach of the carnal mind; therefore always we find the apostle, when
handling.

handling these mysterious points, meeting with a number of objections, and here saith, *What shall we say then?*

II. Albeit carnal reason be blind in the matters of God, yet it is so proud and arrogant, that it would still question the ways of the infinitely wise God, and have all the ways of his deep and unfearchable wisdom modelled according to its apprehension, or else declare its dissent and dissatisfaction: for here carnal reason objecteth, There must then be *unrighteousness with God*.

III. When carnal reason cannot reach the mysteries of God, or findeth them not complying with its apprehensions, so confident is it of its own perfection, that it will never question its own weakness, but rather roll over the blame upon the infinitely wise God, and rather say, that God's ways are not righteous, than acknowledge its own ignorance, in not being able to understand the ways of the Lord: for here they are readier to say, that there is *unrighteousness with God*, than to question their own incapacity; for it is said, *Is there unrighteousness with God?*

IV. It is no new thing to see men of corrupt minds loadening the doctrine of predestination of particular persons, without the foresight of faith or good works, with a number of absurdities; and in particular, it is an old trick of Satan to loaden it with this absurdity, that it would give clear ground of blaming God of unrighteousness if he took such a course as that; for even then it was objected, *Is there unrighteousness with God?*

V. Howbeit men of corrupt minds have a great prejudice against the mysteries of God, and truths transcending their reach and capacity, or not suiting with their apprehensions; yet truth should still be precious to us, and we should not flinch from it the more of that, nor labour to extricate ourselves by carnal distinctions; but plainly declare the truth, and stand to it upon all hazards, as the apostle doth here,

who, notwithstanding of the objection, goes on upon the same purpose, and maintaineth what he had said.

VI. It is certain that the Lord was not moved at the foresight either of good in some, or evil in others, when he predestinated some to glory and others to death; for if so there had been no colour for this objection, *Is there unrighteousness with God?*

VII. All God's ways, being founded on wisdom, are full of justice and righteousness, being the ways of him who is righteous altogether, and just in all his actions; for to this objection he answereth, *God forbid*.

VIII. However the Lord's purposes and decrees seem to us to be incompatible with the rules of justice and equity, and altho' we cannot tell how to reconcile the same with the rules of righteousness; yet we should rest fully satisfied, when we know that such indeed are his purposes, and conclude, that certainly they must be righteous: *God forbid*, says he.

From Verses 15. 16. OBSERVE,

I. The most sure and perfect way of clearing and confirming truths, which carnal and corrupt reason barks against, is, not to reply to their corrupt ratiocinations, and think to satisfy them according to their imaginations, but to bring them to the law and to the testimony, as that which all should submit unto, and which cannot lie, being the word of the Spirit of truth, and which is fully able to decide all controversies, solve all questions, and satisfy all cases; for the apostle in prosecuting the matter of predestination, notwithstanding of what corrupt reason had said against it, appeals to the scripture, and cites a passage out of Exodus, where the Lord said, *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious*.

II. A truth may be agreeable unto the word of God, tho' it be not confirmed in as many words and syllables out of God's word, if it be confirmed by good and necessary

cessary consequence from the word; for by consequence only doth the apostle prove the point he is upon, from that place out of Exodus, as we shewed in the exposition.

III. The Lord, in predestinating some to life, and others to destruction, walks according to the counsel of his own will, and as a stately Prince, having supreme authority over all men and women, who are his creatures, and unlimited superiority, having power to do with his creatures whatsoever seemeth good in his eyes; so that predestination is an act of sovereignty; and therefore is said to be *according to the good pleasure of his will*, Eph. i. 5. and *according to his purpose*, Eph. i. 11.: for *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*.

IV. Whatever the Lord doth by his transcendent and unlimited power, where in he is not tied to the same rules by which he tieth his creatures, can no ways be accounted unrighteous; he being above all law is a law to himself, and his will is the rule of righteousness: for to answer the objection that seemed to lay and impute unrighteousness to God in his predestinating, he answereth thus, that it is his will; so that whatever he willeth, must be accounted righteous: therefore he says, *For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*.

V. As God did from all eternity predestinate some to everlasting life, so hath he decreed that it shall be brought about so, as he shall have the glory of his mercy shining eminently forth in the carrying on of his design; and therefore hath purposed that they shall be in such a case as to need mercy: out of the depth of his wisdom hath he done this, that he might get the glory of his attributes: for *he hath mercy even on the elect ones*, and it is by a way of mercy that he brings them to life.

VI. The elect, notwithstanding of God's everlasting love, whereby they are predestinated unto life, before that in God's own time they be effectually called and justified, are lying in a state of sin and misery, under

guilt, both original and actual, and God's curse, and so stand in need of mercy: *He hath mercy on whom he will, and compassion on whom he will have compassion*: now *mercy* and *compassion* do always presuppose *misery*.

VII. As before all eternity when God pitched his love and affection upon his own, he did it without any consideration of their good deeds, freely, according to his own good-will and pleasure; so in time, when his everlasting love began to break up and appear above ground, it was free and undeserved, and without any foresight of their works, or the like; for *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*.

VIII. God's arbitrary way of walking, in shewing mercy, in time, to whom he will, merely out of his own good pleasure, may abundantly confirm the truth of his arbitrary way of walking in his eternal acts and purposes of his heart; for this is the apostle's argument, as we shewed in the exposition: *He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*.

IX. The mercy which God sheweth unto his own people is most tender, wonderful, and inexpressible; he hath bowels of mercy, and not only so, but he hath compassion: *He hath compassion on whom he will have compassion*: and so he useth two words to the same purpose.

X. As God's mercies are free and tender, so are they infinite and large, answering all the cases of a poor believer, pardoning all their offences of whatever nature; yea, and they are lasting also, and unchangeable: *He has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he has compassion on whom he will have compassion*; mercy and compassion both: and his saying, *he has mercy on whom he will*, says, that he is unchangeable in it.

XI. As man has no strength by nature, nor free will for any thing that is good, being altogether averse from good, and prone to what is evil, and so has no hand in his own bringing out of darkness into light; so, far less could he have any hand

in his own election; his free will, good disposition and inclination were not required as meriting the same: for *it is not of him that willeth.*

XII. As a man's intentions and resolutions are altogether laid aside, both in the matter of election, and bringing them out of nature into grace; so also are his endeavours, pains, and sweatings of all sorts: *Nor of him that runeth.*

XIII. The rise of election and the carrying of it on, is only in the Lord; all bred first in his own breast, and all is so carried on, as the glory of it may wholly and singly be his own: *But of God who sheweth mercy.*

VERSES 17. 18. *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth.

AS before the apostle shewed, how, in the matter of predestination, the Lord followed a way of absolute sovereignty, and unlimited supremacy, by demonstrating how in time, as to such acts which belong to the execution and actual bringing about of his everlasting purpose of love and good-will, he walketh according to the rule of his own absolute will; in which acts, tho' most obvious, yet none hath any just ground thence, to blame the just Lord of injustice: So, in like manner, that the objection proposed, may be fully answered, he sheweth, how, in the matter of reprobation, the Lord also followeth an absolute way, and traceth a transcendent path of sovereignty, in passing by and destinating so many unto everlasting destruction, not following any laws or imaginations of vain man, who would hedge in the Most High with their own laws and limits. And as he cleared

the matter of election by such acts as tended to the actual execution thereof; so doth he now labour to clear the matter of reprobation, by producing such acts as tend to the actual execution thereof; and sheweth, how in these the Lord walketh according to the counsel of his own will. We may take up his argument thus; If God hardeneth, in his wise providence, whom he will, without any ground of injustice or wrong-doing to any, then he may justly appoint whom he will to everlasting destruction, without any ground of injustice: But so it is that God, in his holy and wise providence, so ordereth matters as some are really hardened, yet so as none can blame the Lord of any act of injustice; Therefore, &c. The major the apostle passeth by, as being most clear in itself; seeing, 1. this act, which is done in time, would seem more liable unto the imputation of injustice than what is done from eternity. 2. The one is a consequent of the other, and the way how the other is actually brought about; for whoever do actually perish are, in some measure, according to their capacity, actually hardened: I say, according to their capacity, because of reprobated children dying in infancy; and whoever are finally and fully obdured, do certainly perish. The minor the apostle proveth thus: If God hardened Pharaoh, to the end he might magnify his power, and shew forth the glory of his own name, then he hardeneth whom he will, and that so as no act of injustice can be imputed to him, because his way is always the same, and uniform, and what he doth with one may abundantly prove what he may do with others, one instance being sufficient for this matter: But so it is that God hardened Pharaoh for this end. The proposition, as I shewed, is clear, and therefore is passed by the apostle. The assumption is in verse 17. being a passage cited out of Exodus ix. 16. where the Lord sent Moses to that tyrannous king Pharaoh, after several refusals, and many miraculous

culous deeds, and gave him this commiſſion to deliver, and among other things, to ſay, *And in very deed, for this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, for to ſhew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared through all the earth.* The concluſion is ſet down, verſe 18. and that not only of this part of the answer, but of the whole, in theſe words, *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

But for farther clearing of theſe verſes, we may take notice, 1^{ſt}, of the way how the apoſtle citeth this place: he ſays, *The ſcripture ſaith unto Pharaoh*; for the ſcripture ſheweth, how Moſes is commanded of the Lord to ſay unto Pharaoh; and thus ſtill appealeth unto ſcripture, and taketh up the ſcripture as ſpeaking as if it had a voice, and the ſcripture's ſpeaking, and the Spirit's, as all one. 2^{dly}, Of the way how the Spirit of the Lord in ſcripture expreſſeth this obduration. And therein we have 1. the act aſcribed to God; and 2. the Lord's holy ends, why he thought fit to act ſo. 1. The act is thus ſet forth, *Have I raiſed thee up*; or, as it is in the original Hebrew, *I have made thee to ſtand*; that is, in my providence I have ſo ordered matters, as that thou whoſe heart was full of perverſeneſs and wickedneſs, ſhould come to the throne, and tyrannize over my people Iſrael, and when I deſired to let them go, ſhouldeſt obſtinate-ly reſuſe; and notwithstanding of my frequently reiterated commands, and terrible wonders which I cauſed to be wrought before thee, thou ſhouldeſt perſiſt in thy wilfulneſs, obſtinacy, and rebellion, till at length thou ſhouldeſt be deſtroyed: As if he had ſaid, I knew what a perverſe, wicked heart thou haſt, maliciously ſet againſt my people, for thy own baſe profit and advantage; and this I would not cure, or remove, by my grace, as I might have done: I ſent my commands to thee, and knew thou wouldeſt not yield; I dealt with thee, and will yet deal with thee, in a way

fuitable to thy corruption, and propoſe ſuch arguments and motives as thy corruption will gather ſtrength from, and at which thy will will neither bow nor break, but become more obſtinate and rebellious. Then, 2. there is the Lord's holy ends: And (1.) more near, *That I might ſhew my power in thee*; that is, of ſet purpoſe I have brought thee to that place, and kept thee alive from the former plagues, and in my holy and wiſe providence, have ſo ordered matters, as that thou grow ſtill the more and the more obſtinate, and ſhall gather all thy power and ſtrength, all thy militia and trained-bands together, that I may deſtroy thee at once, and thereby make thee feel how ſtrong a party I am, and how great folly it is in thee to fight againſt me, and kick againſt the pricks; for the Hebrew may be rendered thus, *That I might ſhew to thee, or make thee ſee.* And then (2.) more remote; *And that my name may be declared through all the earth*: that is, that in all places where this ſhould be known, I might get the glory of my power, in overturning and overthrowing a proud and mighty tyrant; of my wiſdom, in outwitting ſuch a monarch, and all his politicians; and of juſtice, in executing judgment on ſuch a tyrannous prince, and wicked people; and of goodneſs and mercy, in delivering his people; and alſo of faithfulness, in keeping promiſe to his own, and fulfilling his threatenings to their enemies. Then the concluſion is, *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* His melting of the hearts of ſome by grace, and hardening of the hearts of others, by reſuſing to mollify them by grace, by propoſing ſuch objects as will occaſion, by reaſon of their corruption, more hardneſs; and delivering them to Satan and their own corrupt hearts, ſo that they ſhall ſtill wax worſe, until they be deſtroyed, are acts of his mere good-will and pleaſure; and in them he followeth his own will.

As in the former verſes we have ſhown,

how the Arminian gloss upon this place of scripture is false and groundless; so, before we come to observe any thing, we shall do here in like manner. They say, the apostle is here clearing how the Lord, without any rub upon his spotless justice, may damn the children of the flesh, that is, such as seek righteousness by the works of the law, because he did so to Pharaoh, for the glory of his justice. But,

1st, We have shown before, that the apostle is meddling with no such question; nor can there any sentence in all the chapter be pitched on, which can, with any shew of probability, ground such a sense; and for it we have nothing but mens groundless dreams, destitute of all colour of proof, and which constraineth all that maintain it to misinterpret, yea, and to use violence to many sentences, as we have had occasion already to shew.

2^{dly}, It should cross our exposition, formerly cleared.

3^{dly}, This would make the apostle's argument to be a *non sequitur*; for it will not follow, that because God raised up and hardened Pharaoh, &c. that therefore God in justice may condemn all such as seek righteousness by the works of the law; and that because Pharaoh is no fit example of such as are seeking righteousness by the works of the law, being a rank Heathen and idolater, little minding righteousness, either by faith, or by the works of the law, moral or ceremonial.

4^{thly}, It would make the place to be impertinently cited: For, 1. there is no mention of any such covenant or purpose, in that place of Exodus. 2. In Exodus the Lord is speaking of such a dispensation towards Pharaoh, as was a fit occasion to give Pharaoh a proof of his power, by saying, *that I might shew my power to thee*; and the mentioning of such a purpose as this, or any thing tending thereto, had not been adequate to the purpose.

3. It will not suit with the scope of the Spirit of the Lord, in that place of Exo-

us, where Moses is sent, and this word put in his mouth, (1.) to lay the boasting and stay the pride of that proud tyrant, who thought, that seeing he had stood out so long, notwithstanding of five or six sore plagues sent already, he might stand out against all that could come; and seeing the God of Moses was not taking away his people by force, he could not do it, but was following another course; and seeing he could not do that, he could not be so powerful as they called him; and therefore he thought himself able enough to stand out against him. And (2.) to strengthen and encourage Moses, that he might not faint, seeing still that mighty king's obstinacy, knowing that he was in God's hand, and that the Lord had a hand in his obduration, having a purpose to get a more glorious name to himself thereby. Now, what can these words contribute to this scope, if they must be so understood, as proving such a proposition?

5^{thly}, According to these mens judgment, this act of obduration was not so peremptory; but Pharaoh, had he pleased, might have turned gracious and believed; and how then can it be a fit proof of God's damning of such as seek righteousness without faith? For suppose he had been converted, he had not then been a proof of this, but rather of the other; and that he might have been converted, notwithstanding of all this sentence of obduration past and to come, is truth, according to their opinion, who will say and grant any thing, before they speak any thing to the disparagement of their Diana, *Eye-will*.

6^{thly}, In this decree and purpose of God, whereby, they say, the Lord has decreed to save all believers, and to damn all such as seek righteousness by the works of the law, they will not have any particular persons comprehended; for such a decree as this, I will save Peter or John, comes in, in the 4th place, in their order of the decrees of God. And then I ask, how this instance of Pharaoh, a man particularized,

ticularized, can prove ſuch a point? Will it not rather prove what we ſay, that the Lord has particularly appointed ſo many, even ſuch and ſuch, to ſalvation, and others, conſidered particularly, he has paſt by and deſtinated to deſtruction?

7thly, We cannot think that the apoſtle is proving that which is manifeſtly falſe, and altogether unbecoming God, as this aſſertion of theirs, viz. That *God hath decreed to ſave all believers, and damn ſuch as believe not*, is, according to their meaning; I ſay, according to their meaning, for I deny not that the thing itſelf is true; for they ſay, the Lord made this decree, when he knew not who in particular ſhould believe and be ſaved, and who not. Now, I ſay, it is altogether unbecoming the Lord to make ſuch decrees: For, 1. notwithſtanding of this decree, it might have come to paſs, that not one ſhould have believed, or that not one ſhould have reſuſed to believe, as is clear; for as yet, in their opinion, the Lord has determined nothing touching the one or the other; yea, it might have come to paſs, that none ſhould either have believed, nor yet not believed; for neither can we believe nor miſbelieve, when there is no goſpel to believe; and as yet, according to their opinion, the Lord is not reſolved to ſend the goſpel, and *where there is no law, there is no tranſgreſſion*. Now, ſuch a decree as this is unbecoming the majeſty of God. 2. This makes God's decrees to be conditional; for the meaning is this, I will ſave Peter and John, if they will believe; and thus God's decrees ſhould hang at man's belt; a moſt unbecoming thing. It is true, he has decreed to ſave none but believers; but his whole decree ſhould be thus taken up: He has decreed to ſave Peter and John, certainly, peremptorily, and determinately, and that by faith, and therefore has decreed as peremptorily, to give ſuch and ſuch, in particular, faith, &c. for both are in one decree; one decree takes in both means, and all the means,

and the end: yea, hence it would follow, that God ſhould not know who ſhould be ſaved, who not.

8thly, According to this opinion, the apoſtle's concluſion ſhould be impertinent: For, 1. it could not follow, that the Lord hardeneth whom he will, for that imports the hardening of particular perſons, but only that he hardeneth what ſort or kind of perſons he pleaſeth, and the apoſtle never ſpeaks ſo. 2. If the meaning of this, *he hardeneth whom he will*, be, that he hardeneth all that deſerve ſuch a puniſhment at his hand; then, in like manner, when he ſays, *he hath mercy on whom he will*, the meaning ſhould be, He hath mercy on ſuch as deſerve it; for there is the ſame reaſon for both: but this were altogether falſe. 3. How can it follow from this, that God puniſheth all unbelievers according to his decree, therefore he puniſheth, or hardeneth, whom he will? for no magiſtrate who puniſheth folk with death according to law, can be ſaid to puniſh by death whom he will; ſuch a ſpeech as this is not uſual: yea, the apoſtle's way of expreſſing himſelf imports a quite other thing, and his whole ſcope alſo. 4. The apoſtle referreth this obduration to the Lord's will, as the prime cauſe thereof, and not to man's actions, as meriting the ſame. 5. And if this had been the meaning of the apoſtle's theſis, which he is now concluding, there had been no ground once to have imagined, how it could ever have entered into the heart of any man to think that God dealt not juſtly in hardening ſuch as deſerved it in juſtice. 6. He ſpeaks of ſuch a hardening as is irrefiſtible, when he ſays, *he hardeneth whom he will*; but they deny all ſuch thing; and nothing elſe but ſuch a hardening could be infered from that place of Exodus: for there it is ſaid, he hardeneth him of purpoſe, that he might thereby get glory; now he had miſſed his end if it had not been peremptory, and ſo the argument would run well thus, He hardened Pharaoh merely for his own holy

ends, and therefore he hardeneth whom he will peremptorily. 7. The very expression of *hardening whom he will*, imports clearly the hardening of particular persons, and not of such or such qualities. 8. If their exposition hold, there could be no seeming ground in the world for the following objection, *Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?* as we shall see more fully afterward.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. In all this mysterious point concerning predestination, both as touching election and reprobation, we should altogether decline the judgment of carnal reason, which is enmity unto God, and have our judgments only captivated by the word of the Lord; therefore doth the apostle prove every piece of this doctrine by the word, and every step is according to the rule: *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh.*

II. There is no point necessary to be known for our salvation, how deep and profound soever it be in itself, and how far soever transcending the reach of human reason, and the capacity of corrupted nature, but acquaintance with the scripture will help us to some clearer apprehensions of it, which is as a compass to guide us by shelves and rocks, and as a thread to guide and direct our steps in many and dangerous turnings and windings; and our unacquaintedness with this lamp makes us many a time wander in the mist, and miss our steps: *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh.*

III. Howbeit many read the scriptures as they do any other book, and find not, nor hear any speaking voice therein; and many look upon it as a dumb and dead letter, unable to decide any controversy; yet it has a powerful voice when it is carried in by the Spirit of God unto the conscience and understanding; and it hath a determining voice, putting a point to all controversies, leaving nothing necessary to be known undecided, if we could rightly take it up; for its voice is the voice of the Spirit of

God, which is a Spirit of truth; what it saith, God saith; for the apostle says, *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh*; for the Lord by Moses said unto Pharaoh, and this is recorded in Scripture, to shew us, that what the scripture saith he saith, and it should be so looked on by us; their voice is one.

IV. It becometh the servants of Jesus Christ to carry themselves faithfully in the discharge of their duty, and to spare neither one nor other, no not the greatest, but courageously, zealously, and faithfully ought they to carry themselves, and deliver the message of the Lord, how bitter and unpleasant soever it be; as indeed sometimes God will put a sharp message in their mouth to deliver unto great ones, who are oftentimes small friends to Christ and his church; for Moses, who was faithful in all things, gets this sad message to carry unto Pharaoh, a king, and a proud tyrant, swelling in his pride and abundance, *For this cause have I raised thee up, &c.*

V. However, when enemies are raging and spueing out their venom against the church of Christ, and are increasing in wickedness, and growing worse and worse, the people of God are ready to think that he has forgotten their case, and is taking no notice of what the enemy is doing against them; yet the Lord is so far from winking at, and miskening what their enemies are plotting and acting, and from being a careless and indifferent spectator, that there is not a consultation they have, or a step they move, but the Lord, in his wise and sinless providence, has a hand in it: *For this cause have I raised thee up.* The Lord is deliberately and advisedly, in his wise providence, carrying them on, for his own holy ends.

VI. Tho' the malicious enemies of God and of his church, be driving at nothing less than the glory of God, when they are plotting and contriving, acting and carrying on their devices, to the ruin and subversion of God's people, and affronting of the Lord their Master; and altho' the people of the

Lord be looking upon him as farthest off from his purposes, and from getting glory to his name, when enemies have the ball at their foot, and all things going on according to their desire; yet the higher his enemies be, they are nearer a fall, and the Lord is nearer his end and purpose; the time of his appearing for manifesting of his power, and glorifying of his name is then at hand; for that was a mean which he used for this end: *For this cause have I raised thee up, that I might shew forth my power in thee.*

VII. As the consideration of this, that the more that wicked enemies think to rob God of his glory, by coming to a height, they do the more contribute to illustrate the same; should lay the pride of enemies; so it should not a little cheer up the spirits of his own people, when they have such proud and prevailing enemies to engage with; for for these ends was it declared unto Moses, that *for this end God had raised him up, &c.*

VIII. Tho' we be ready to admire and wonder, why the Lord, who may crush the devices of his enemies in the very shell, and break their power in the bud, and so hinder them ever from coming to a head, suffereth them to prosper and gather forces, and come to their height; yet we see it is for wise and holy ends, even for the glory of his own name: *For this cause have I raised thee up,---that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

IX. The upshot of all the enemies victories, plots and devices, will be glory to God's great name: *For this cause have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth:* he will thereby get the glory of his power, when he has squeezed them, even when they are at a top-spring of pride and strength; and of his faithfulness, in minding his covenant and promise; of his justice, in taking vengeance on his enemies, when all would think they are past correction; and of his goodness and mercy, in kything them, when

his people and all onlookers are most ready to suspect his love, and to cry out, that his mercies hath failed for ever, and that he hath forgotten to be gracious; and also of his wisdom, in so contriving and carrying on the whole business, as serving most to advance his glory.

X. Albeit the Lord, who is holiness itself, be free of sin, and cannot justly be accounted the author thereof; yet sin entereth not into the world whether he will or not, or beyond his intention; nor is he a bare spectator and onlooker when sin is committed, but hath decreed, from all eternity, that sin shall exist by his permission; tho' he approve not of sin, yet he purposeth and decreeth, that sin shall be committed, himself permitting it willingly, for his own holy ends: for here he has a holy active hand in hardening Pharaoh; *For this cause have I raised thee up,* I have made thee to stand; and Pharaoh's hardness of heart was a great sin; and this active verb, *I have raised thee up, or made thee to stand,* signifies more than a naked permission, or an indifferent on-looking; and this hardness of heart doth not fall out beyond the Lord's intention, seeing it is intended as a mean to bring about his end: *For this cause have I raised thee up.*

XI. The Lord, in hardening of the hearts of some, doth not infuse any wickedness, as if he thereby did make soft hearts hard; nor doth he allow it by his command, nor force it by his power; nor doth he harden only by the preaching of the gospel, which Pharaoh never heard. But, 1. by not removing that natural hardness which is upon the heart, and denying his grace whereby that might be helped. 2. And delivering them over to Satan who blindeth them more, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and to the swing of their own corruption; laying the bridle on their own neck, Rom. i. 28. 2 Thes. ii. 11. And, 3. by dispensing so in and about them, in his wise and holy providence, as that thereby their corruption is the more irritable, and their hearts are

are the more hardened; thus he endueth them with knowledge, saveth them out of many inconveniencies, spareth them from plagues, and maketh providence smile upon them, so that they encourage themselves in their wickedness; and sends his curse along with plagues and judgments that they meet with, so as they profit them not, Amos iv. 6. 8. Jer. ii. 30. and v. 3. and thus in a holy, wise, and unspeakable manner, he acteth in their hardening, and carrieth it on, tho' we cannot well tell how, or what way, his judgments being a great depth: *For this cause have I raised thee up; and he hardeneth whom he will;* and thus he is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart, eight times over and more, Exod. iv. 21. and vii. 13. and ix. 12. and x. 1. 20. 27. and xi. 10. and xiv. 8. 17. see also Deut. ii. 30. Jos. xi. 20. Isa. vi. 9. 10. John xii. 39. Rom. xi. 8.

XII. Tho' often-times we find in scripture, that obduration is inflicted as a terrible punishment, for former sins, as 2 Thes. ii. 11. Rom. i. 28. and so is an effect of justice, and flowing from the Lord as a righteous Judge, governing the world according to his own laws; yet if we consider the business complexly, and also, why, first and last, the Lord dispenseth so to one, and not to another; why he doth not remove the stony heart from one, but denieth his grace, whereby a heart of flesh might be had in its stead; and why he in his deep wisdom so carrieth on the business, through all his dispensations, as that that natural hardness of heart is still upon the growing hand, when as he dispenseth just contrary ways with another, removing their natural blindness and hardness of heart, and making every dispensation, whether sweet or sharp, tend to their advantage: the prime cause of all will be the Lord's absolute will and good pleasure; *He hardeneth whom he will.*

XIII. This act of the most holy and wise God, whereby he hardeneth hearts, is not such a negative desertion, as leaveth

it at man's door whether he will be hardened or not hardened; for then men might escape God's plagues whether he would or not; contrary to 1 Sam. iii. 14. Amos ix. 2. 3. 4. Deut. xxxii. 39. and it should be no act terminated on the hardened; nor is it such an act as hath obduration following upon it by accident, but such (whatever way we name it) as hath the sinful and culpable obduration of the hardened, inseparably following thereupon, and annexed thereto; for *he hardeneth whom he will*: and obduration doth infallibly follow thereupon, else he should be frustrated in his end and expectation: *For this cause,* says he, *I have raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee;* if Pharaoh, after God's act of obduration, had not been culpably and actually hardened, God's power had not been shown in him, nor his name thereby declared abroad.

XIV. Albeit wicked tyrants and enemies of God may think that they are delivered to do all these abominations, and that they are countenanced and approved of God, when providence smiles upon them, and every thing falleth out according to their own heart's desire; and the Lord is, in his wise providence, making things concur which will best suit with their depraved temper and wicked inclination; yet even then the Lord may be raining plagues upon their souls, and pouring forth his judgment upon them: for he raised up Pharaoh, and brought him to a kingdom; granted him some profit by the people of God's being under his feet; delivered him from many plagues; suffered the magicians to feign the like miracles which Moses wrought, and did not discover their deceit unto him; brought his own people unto such a pass, as that he might think they were undoubtedly all his prisoners, being (as we use to say) into a hose-net: and yet in all this he was but judicially hardening his heart; for *he thus raised him up,* and thereby sheweth that *he hardeneth whom he will.*

XV. Albeit mercy be an essential property in God; yet it is regulate, as to its actual exercise, according to his good pleasure and will: *He hath mercy on whom he will.*

XVI. Though God's goodness, in some measure and kind, extend to all his creatures; for all of them live, move, and have their being in him; and albeit the wicked do enjoy many external privileges and favours; yet his special mercy, bringing out of nature into grace, giving a soft and tender heart, and delivering from the plague of obduration, is not bestowed upon all; *he hath mercy only on whom he will.*

XVII. The consideration of the Lord's leaving of some in the gall of bitterness, and by other holy, hid and sublime acts of his, hardening their hearts, will much set forth the wonderful goodness of God in having mercy upon others; therefore they are set down together here, *He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

VERSES 19. 20. 21. *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?*

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

THE objections which are made use of by men of corrupt minds, and enemies to the truth, against the matter of predestination of particular persons from eternity, flowing from the mere will and good pleasure of God, without any previous consideration of good or evil in men, moving God to predestinate them either to life or death, are reducible to two heads; the one comprehending such as would seem to infer hence, That therefore

it would follow, that God was unjust: and to this head the apostle has abundantly answered in the preceding verses. The other head comprehenderh such as would hence infer, That thence it would follow, that man is innocent, and free from all iniquity, and not culpable before God. From this absurdity, with which this doctrine is loaded, the apostle freeth it here, in these verses, and in the next. He takes occasion to mention this objection from what he had said last, *viz. That he hardeneth whom he will*; that is, that as from all eternity, he hath appointed so many to death; so, in time, according to his own good pleasure, in his wise and holy providence, he effectually bringeth about these means whereby they are hardened infallibly. And thus it may be taken up, *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault, &c.* that is, Seeing the Lord has from eternity, according to the good pleasure of his will, destinated so many unto death, and hath so ordered matters, as that these same persons are in time actually hardened; how can the Lord lay any thing to their charge? how can he accuse, reprehend, threaten and punish? the verb signifieth all these: the reason of the objection is added, *For who hath resisted his will*; that is, seeing no man living is able to withstand God, to enter the lists with him, to stand out against him, and to hinder or oppose his efficacious decrees; and it is according to his decree, that such and such be hardened, and so perish for ever; how can he challenge man for that which is not in man's power to avoid? This is the objection, to which he giveth three answers: the first is, verse 20. *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God; shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* In which answer, illuding to Isa. xlv. 9. he checketh the arrogance of carnal reason, that will have the Lord framing all his ways according to its model; Seeing, 1. whoever he be who is making and

and framing the objection, he is but a man, a poor, sinful, base, crawling creature. And, 2. he is not contending, in so arguing, with a man like himself; but he is engaging in dispute against the God of heaven and earth his Maker, a very unequal match, and it is unbeseeming proud man once to attempt such a thing. And; 3. it is altogether unhandsome, and no way seemly, for the creature, that is but a formed thing, to say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? and this he says to stop their mouth in all time coming; for carnal wits will never else give it over, but will still be barking against that truth, which they neither can, nor will understand; and what they love not to comply with, they will still be making exceptions against, to their own shame and confusion. But, secondly, lest his adversaries (as the Marcionites and Manichees, of old, blasphemously did) should say, that the apostle, when he could not answer the objection, took such a course as this, to drive the objectors from it therefore, in the next place. verse 21. he saith, *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour?* Where he maketh use of a similitude, taken from a potter, who hath just and lawful power to pitch upon what piece of the same lump of clay which is under his hand, whereof to make a vessel for some high and honourable employment; and of the same lump may take another piece, and of that frame a vessel for some baser employment and use; and hereby he doth clearly make out, that, seeing the potter hath such power, and may dispose of the same lump as he thinks fit, which lump of clay is not of his own creating, but rather his fellow-creature; much more may the Lord dispose of the same mass of mankind, which is his own creature, and so more subject to him than the clay to the potter; and choose, according to his own good pleasure, some of it to be vessels of

honour and mercy, and of the rest make vessels of dishonour and wrath: Thus the meaning of the words is clear. And here we find, that the apostle doth not so much labour to satisfy the objection, as to clear and confirm the point he was upon more, giving us to understand, that this truth must be believed, altho' carnal reason cannot see thro' it; and that inconveniencies, which carnal wits can invent to loaden truth with, should not loose our faith of them, having sufficient ground therefore in the word. Thus therefore, by this similitude, the apostle is clearing the business from the very fountain, by shewing, that all mankind, whom God had a purpose to create in due time, were before the Lord as a lump of clay, neither pure nor impure; and out of this, the Lord, according to his own will, chose some to life, and others to death, and accordingly purposed in time to bring the one to life, and the other to death, for his own holy ends, as being supreme Potter, having undoubted power for that effect.

So then the Arminian gloss must, upon many scores, be rejected, which is this: It is objected (say they) thus, If God hardeneth such and such persons (*viz.* such as deserve it) as he willet, then how can he be offended, if man be hardened by that will which no man can resist? how can God be angry at him, *viz.* by that will by which he will harden the impenitent who have despised his patience? And the apostle's answer (they say) is this, As the potter hath power over the clay, &c. so the Lord hath power to make what laws he pleaseth; to make such vessels of wrath who will not believe, and such as do believe vessels of mercy. This is the sum of their gloss; which must be rejected for many causes.

1st, Because the apostle starteth no objections, but what have some seeming footing in his words and expressions, or doctrine delivered by him; but there is no seeming ground for such an objection at all,

all, if we take the former words according to their exposition: for when he said, (as they would have) that he hardeneth such as believe not, how could any think, that they could go free at God's hand.

2dly, In our exposition, we shewed how clearly the objection riseth from what was said, and how clear the connection is here; which, according to their exposition, we cannot find.

3dly, This objection seems to be a great business, and the apostle's way of handling it, seems to say that it is no easy matter for flesh and blood to get satisfaction in it; and therefore he might come to it, with a *nay but who art thou, O man, who disputest against God?* Now, sure the objection, as they proposed it, containeth no great matter of difficulty; for what great business is here? If the Lord decreeth to harden the impenitent, why is he then angry? Is it not a known thing, that any prince may make laws in his kingdom, and be angry when these laws are violated, or punish the breakers?

4thly, If this had been all, sure the apostle would never have gone up to God's absolute power and sovereignty, as he doth.

5thly, Yea, the apostle might more easily have satisfied the objection than he did, if that had been the ground and meaning, by saying, that God may rule the world by his own laws, and who can blame him.

6thly, But the apostle was speaking of the hardening of particular persons, which infallibly followeth the Lord's decree; for *he hardeneth whom he will*: and hence it might be said, If our hardening flow from his will merely, then we are free, and not guilty, and cannot justly be punished; and therefore saith he, *Why doth he yet find fault*: now this objection is a far different thing from what they suppose it to be.

7thly, And it is more clear, considering the ground of it; *For who hath resisted his will*; hereby referring the hardness solely unto the will of God, as flowing

therefrom, and caused thereby, and that inevitably. And so,

8thly, The apostle's answer, if suitable, must speak something to this, and not shew what none questioneth.

9thly, But what can they understand here by the mass? None can conjecture: The similitude says, there must be one lump, out of which part is put one way, and part another, or else the apostle's comparison is not apposite; and what this one lump is, who can tell? the parts of it indeed are these; the way to heaven by faith in Christ, and the way to hell without faith; and what the whole mass is, who can tell?

10thly, Vessels of honour and vessels of dishonour, are meant of particular persons, whom the Lord fits for heaven, or passeth by; and is not taken for particular ways of bringing folk to heaven, as by faith, and not by works; Who can call the way of works a vessel of wrath, or dishonour; and to say, that only such as seek righteousness by the works of the law, are such as they call vessels of wrath, is, 1. to fetch an exposition too far, and to use an intolerable licence in interpreting. 2. Vessels of wrath seem to be such as shall perish; but all that seek righteousness by the works of the law shall not perish, unless they break not off that course, but persevere in it to the end; but according to their judgment, none can be vessels of wrath so long as they live, because it is in their power to change when they will; and yet in the next verse we hear of vessels of wrath, towards whom God exerciseth much patience: The like might be said of the vessels of mercy, who are particularly known by the Lord, and so are said to be *prepared unto glory*, verse 23.

11thly, By their opinion the will of God may be resisted, the contrary whereof the apostle's answer seemeth to grant; for by it they understand God's law, and this is daily violated; they deny any secret

will, by which he determineth of events: And if they say, that by *will* here, they understand that purpose and decree of his, by which he will damn all unbelievers, then by *hardening* here, they must understand *damning*; and if so, what sense will there be in these words, *Why doth he yet find fault?* for it is as if it were said, If he damn such and such, why finds he fault with them when damned according to his will? Is it any fault in them to be damned? or can God punish them because he punisheth them? beside, that Pharaoh's hardening is not so to be understood. And if they take *hardening* for *refusing of mercy*, it is a sin, and so a transgressing of the law; and to transgress the law, is to resist his will.

12thly They make always the apostle to be concluding that which he no where sets down, *viz.* that God may send such to hell as seek righteousness by the works of the law.

13thly, Again, sure when he brings in the similitude of the potter, it would appear, that he ascribeth as much power to God over men, as the potter hath over the clay; and if so, sure something more will follow hence, than this conclusion of theirs; If God hath as much power over man, as the potter over the clay, then he may lawfully damn such as seek heaven by the law. This indeed is true; but I think more may be concluded hence also, *viz.* That God may as justly make some men to honour and others to dishonour, as the potter doth some part of the clay for a honourable use, and other vessels to dishonour.

Much more might be said, if their expositions were followed out; and it is no small difficulty to find out what they would be at, they are so confused and intricate; and labour mainly to keep up their meaning, or at least so to express it, as it should not easily be taken up; because the clear upraking of it were a ready way to confute and cast it.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is a dangerous matter to consult with flesh and blood, and follow the judgment of carnal reason in the matters of God; corrupted reason will go blind in the deep mystery of predestination, and therefore will still be objecting: *Thou wilt say then unto me.*

II. When carnal reason cannot sound the depths of the mysteries of God, but is bemisted, and has any prejudice against the excellent truths of God; then, when it can do no more, it will load the truth with supposed inconveniencies and absurdities, to make it less lovely, and, if it can, to make it less credible or feasible: *Thou wilt say then, Why doth he yet find fault?*

III. Among other things, which the corrupted wit of man loadeneth the doctrine of predestination, without any foresight of works, and the effectual bringing of the business about, withal; this is one, that then man shall be innocent and free, and God shall have nothing to accuse him for; and corrupted reason thinks, that God's purposes cannot stand, if man go not entirely free, in this matter: *Thou wilt say then, Why doth he yet find fault.*

IV. Albeit the Lord's revealed will, whereby he lays forth unto us what is our duty, and what is good and acceptable in his sight, be oftentimes, both by good and bad, resisted and opposed; yet his will, whereby he determineth the events of things, whether they shall actually exist, or not exist, can never be resisted by any thing which man can do; *He is of one mind, and who can turn him? and whatever his soul desireth, that he doth, Job xxiii. 13. Who hath resisted his will?*

V. Natural reason can conclude and acknowledge, that the purposes of God cannot fail; and that it is not in the power of weak man to oppose or hinder the execution of the decrees and intentions of the Most High: for even the ob-

objectors can say, *Who hath resisted his will?*

VI. According to this purposing and decreeing will of God, it is, that sin exists in the world; and tho' God do not approve of sin, yet he willesh and decreeth that it shall be, thro' his permission; for by this will it is that hardness of heart exists, even such hardness of heart as is culpable: For, *why doth he yet find fault? Who hath resisted his will?*

VII. Albeit we cannot reach the depth of the Lord's counsels, that are past finding out; yet is it our duty to believe with an implicate faith whatever the Lord is pleased to reveal, and make known in his word, and not to dispute and quarrel with God; submissive believing, is a most suitable carriage for a Christian, in matters that transcend his capacity; we should rather admire and adore, than question or quarrel: *Nay but who art thou, O man, &c.*

VIII. It is a great evidence of pride and arrogance in man, to think to call the Most High to an account, and to dispute against the Lord's ways, as not equitable and just, when they agree not with his conceptions and apprehensions: *Who art thou, O man?* as if he had said, You are a proud conceit piece, that dare thus quarrel with the Most High.

IX. The right consideration of our frailty, blindness and ignorance, would still the tumultuating clamours which rise in us against the ways of the Lord; and when we would model God's transcendent ways according to our own mould, we forget how blind moles we are, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *Who art thou, O man?* Thou who art but a man, dost thou think to comprehend the infinite ways of God?

X. If we did seriously consider and remember how great and high a God he is with whom we have to do; how high and transcendent his ways and thoughts are above ours, Isa. lv. 9. we would be loth to give any entertainment unto quarrelling thoughts, nor would we dispute against the

ways of the Lord, when we could not comprehend them in our narrow and shallow brains: This would stop our mouth, and make us silent, to know that our disputing is a disputing *against God.*

XI. It is a most unseemly and unreasonable thing to see the creature, who has nothing of itself, but wholly dependeth on God, quarrel with him, who is every way independent and supreme, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth, in heaven and in earth: *Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* It is proposed by way of question, as being unanswerable, even by carnal reason itself; not that God did form man as he is, sinful, or was the cause and author of his sin; only it followeth, that God made man changeable, and by his everlasting decree purposed, that man should actually sin, through his permission, and fall from his happy estate; and when the Lord has done so, man has no just ground to quarrel with him; for man being his creature, behoved to be changeable, seeing to be unchangeable is God's property; and in that he willed and decreed, that sin should exist, thro' his permission, what has man to say against this? May not the Lord dispose of events as he thinks fit? this decree laid no bonds on man's will, but notwithstanding thereof he did willingly and wittingly, freely, without any compulsion or coercion, sin against God; and every one's conscience can bear witness to this, that they sin and transgress the law of their own accord, and find no external restraint or constraint upon them at all.

XII. God has an absolute and unlimited power over man, his creature, and may lawfully dispose of him as he thinks good, for his own holy ends, even more absolute power than the potter hath over the clay under his hand: *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?* and whatever power a created potter hath over the clay, his own fellow-creature,

creature, the Lord hath much more over his creatures, that have no being but by him.

XIII. This absolute power which God hath over man, whereby he disposeth certainly and inevitably of him, is such as doth well consist with man's culpability and guiltiness; and both these we are to believe, viz. that God has certainly disposed of the end of every man, and the means conducing to that end, and so hath determined that, certainly and inevitably, man shall sin thus and thus; and that, notwithstanding thereof, man is culpable before God, and justly liable to the stroke of justice; albeit we cannot see thro' the connection and consistency of these: for there is no ground for the objection, or for any to say, that God *should not find fault*; and yet this is truth, that *the potter hath power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour*: There may be and certainly is a connection, tho' we should never be thoroughly acquainted with it on this side of time.

XIV. In these deep and mysterious points, we should not follow such a way of handling them, as will suit most with corrupt and carnal reason, and best satisfy all that it can object; but tho' we cannot see the consistency of one piece of his will with another, or of one truth with another, yet we ought not to quit with any thing that is revealed the more of that; but we should cleave to what God hath revealed, and acknowledge our own blindness, when we can reach no further, and answer all the objections of opposers with this, *Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?* Thus the apostle adheres to the truth concerning God's absolute power, tho' carnal reason should still have something to say against it; and albeit he answereth not directly to the objection, yet he sincheth not from the truth, but still maintaineth God's absolute power, saying, *Hath not the potter power, &c.*

XV. The Lord's act of predestination,

electing some and reprobating others, being from eternity, in it he considered the whole mass of mankind as uncreated; and out of that uncreated mass, according to his absolute and unlimited power, chose some to be vessels of honour, and some to be vessels of dishonour: for the Lord has no less power over man than the potter over the clay, who out of the same lump, as unfit for to be vessels of honour as of dishonour, chooseth some piece for the one use, and some for the other, according to his own liberty and power; even so, the Lord, out of the same lump, as much disposed in itself, to be all vessels of honour, as to be vessels of dishonour, elected some, and reprobated others: *Hath not the potter power over the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*

VERSES 22. 23. *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?*

IN these two verses, we conceive, there are three things done: 1st, There is a third answer given unto the last objection. 2^{dly}, There is a ground laid down for answering all objections whatsoever, which can be proposed against the doctrine of predestination. And, 3^{dly}, There is the substance of the doctrine of predestination, wonderfully couched up in few words, and clearly laid open in all its parts. And,

1st, I say there is a third answer unto the last objection, which we may take up thus: Notwithstanding of his absolute decree of reprobation, and of his efficacious way of bringing this about, by the hardening of whom he will, yet the way is so contrived, and the matter so carried on, as that they actually slight his offers of mercy, as to many of them, and abuse his goodness and lenity

lenity towards them, which ſhould have been otherways improv'd by them; the Lord doth ſo carry on the matter; as that he exerciſeth much patience and tendernels even toward ſuch as he hath reprobated; (meaning ſuch as are adult, and come to years of knowledge, and eſpecially ſuch as are within the viſible church; for we look upon the apoſtle as treating of this buſineſs always with an eye unto the Jews, concerning whom the diſpute was ſtarted;) and therefore tho' they be hardened, yet the Lord is not in the wrong, but they are culpable, and there is ground for the Lord to find fault with them; therefore he ſays, *What if God--- endured, with much long-ſuffering, the veſſels of wrath.* In which answer he doth not labour to ſatisfy the curioſity of carnal reaſon in every point, but ſo handleth the matter, as that it muſt ſtill be looked on as a myſtery in which we ought not to pry beyond what is written; and yet he gives us this much to underſtand; as that however reaſon cannot receive ſatisfaction, yet man ſhall find himſelf in the wrong, and be forced to juſtify the Lord in the whole procedure.

2dly, There is a ground laid down, for ſtopping all men's mouths, and answering all their objections of whatſoever kind; *What if God, willing to ſhew his wrath, &c.* as if he had ſaid, What has any body to ſay againſt God or his ways? what if he has a mind to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, and the riches of his glory; what can any ſay againſt this? If the Lord be about to make his attributes known, and to manifeſt his own glory, ſhall any preſume to have a negative voice in the buſineſs, and that nothing ſhall be done but what they are ſatisfied with? Therefore the apoſtle propoſeth the matter queſtionways, the more to touch the conſciences of oppoſers, propoſing it ſo as they could not answer it for their hearts: *What if God, willing to ſhew his wrath, &c.* What can any body ſay to this? is there any wrong done to any? will any hinder God

from making himſelf glorious? If all that the Lord is doing is only to get glory to himſelf, what are we that we ſhould oppoſe it? Is it ſeemly that we ſhould vie with God, and hinder him from his glory? And ſeeing this is his end, can he do us any wrong in driving at this end? or can there be any thing done unſuitable to himſelf? Sure not. All which will be clearer in the next. Therefore,

3dly, There is here the compend of the doctrine of predeſtination, and ſubſtance of it couched up in ſhort: For, 1. it is ſet forth in its two branches, viz. The act of election, and the act of reprobation: The act of election is in theſe words, *Before prepared unto glory*; that is, from all eternity, had in his own purpoſe and good-will appointed unto glory; and the act of reprobation in theſe words, *Fitted to deſtruction*; that is, plaſtered up, or ſo wrought together for deſtruction; the verb ſignifieth ſometimes to ſolder or glue together, as workmen do their pieces of work; and ſo they are fitted to deſtruction. 2. The perſons are deſcribed, or mentioned, about whom theſe acts are paſſed: the elect ones are called *veſſels of mercy*; that is, inſtruments in and by whom the Lord manifeſts his mercy, and ſuch upon whom the Lord leteth out much of his mercy. The reprobated are called *veſſels of wrath*, as being ſuch by whom God manifeſteth the greatneſs of his wrath and anger, and who are made to drink deep of his anger and diſpleaſure. 3. There is the end of this great buſineſs, and that which moved God to do all this; in ſhort, it is himſelf, his own glory: this, and this only, was the moving cauſe; for there is nothing without him that can move him, ſo he did all this for the glory of his own name; and particularly, in reprobating ſo many, he had before his eyes, (1.) the glory of his juſtice; *That he might ſhew his wrath*; that is, that he might make his vindictive juſtice known. And (2.) *To make his power known*, in executing vengeance on tranſgreſſors.

gressors, tho' they are never so mighty and powerful: Yea, and (3.) his *patience*, that he *endures with much long-suffering*. (4.) And, upon the other hand, in the vessels of mercy he intended to *make known the riches of his glory*; that is, the exceeding abundance of his free grace, which is glorious indeed, and is the high way to glory. 4. There is the way how this business is brought about: The elect are to be saved, yet in such a way as mercy shall most appear; the reprobate shall be damned, yet in such a way as shall be suitable to justice; and therefore the one is called, *the vessels of mercy*, the other, *the vessels of wrath*; and so it is clearly supposed, that certainly sin shall exist, thro' the Lord's permission, and that according to his purpose, otherways the Lord could not save some, by way of mercy, and damn others, by way of justice. This is further explained as to the reprobate, in these words, *bath endured with much long-suffering*; he has waited upon them long, and has not presently cut them off, according as he might have done in justice, but spared them long, that so his justice might the more appear on the vessels of wrath, and his mercy toward the vessels of mercy.

In the last place, we shall take notice what gloss the Arminians put on these words. They say the meaning of the 22d verse is this: As the potter hath power of the same lump to make some vessels unto honour, and some to dishonour; so the Lord, being willing to shew his wrath and power against sin, hath no less power to harden the children of the flesh, and fit the vessels of wrath to destruction, whom he has suffered long in patience: and so the objection is answered. And thus they explain the 23d verse: None have reason to quarrel with God for appointing the children of the promise to honour, without the consideration of works, or of the carnal prerogative of Abraham; seeing none can thereby be justified now since the fall; and therefore there is no injustice

here, that the Lord should prepare the vessels of mercy by faith in Christ; but neither the one nor the other is to be understood of particular persons, particularly condescended on. But,

1st, It is not fit for us to take up the objection as we think best, and then to think what will best answer it, according to our apprehension, and so force the apostle to answer as we would have him; nor should we hereby give out that we are wiser than the apostle, as being more able to shape an answer to the objection: nor should that way please us best, in this mysterious matter, which we understand best; God's ways may be beyond our reach and capacity, and yet may be truly his ways.

2^{dly}, By this exposition the apostle's similitude should be a plain and clear dissimilitude; for when he is speaking of the potter's power, he is meaning an absolute power free from all law; there is no law binding the potter to make of this piece a vessel of honour, and of the other a vessel to dishonour; but in that he doth according to his absolute will and pleasure: but when he is speaking of God's power, they mean by it a legal power, a power exercised according to law and justice, and so a limited power. But,

3^{dly}, The apostle's argument will seem to say more; for it may be thus taken up: What the potter may do with the clay, God may much more do with man: But the potter may make of the same lump one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, and that merely according to his own good will and pleasure; therefore God may much more, of the same lump of mankind, chuse one to life, and to be a vessel of mercy, and another to be a vessel of wrath. But,

4^{thly}, Their exposition gives to the potter that which is more, and to God that which is less; and thus the apostle should cross his own argument, verse 20. where he hints at the contrary, saying, *Hath not the potter power?* the very way of proposing this, question-ways, says, it is an absurd

surd blasphemous thing to ascribe more power to a creature over his fellow creature, than to God over the work of his own hands.

5thly, The reddition of the comparison is not in these verses, as is clear by their beginning *What if?* If the reddition were here, the apostle would have said, *Even so, or much more.*

6thly, They will not have the apostle to mean particular individual persons, elected or reprobated, and yet the apostle's words say as much, seeing he says, some are *vessels of wrath*, and vessels of wrath *fitted*; for some are *vessels of mercy*, and vessels of mercy *before prepared*, and so certainly particularly condescended on.

7thly, They say, That they were vessels of wrath towards whom God exercised much long-suffering, before they were fitted to destruction; but, 1. the apostle says the contrary, *viz.* that they were vessels of wrath, and vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, before ever he used any patience, towards them, otherways he could not be said, to endure with long-suffering such vessels of wrath as *were fitted*, but rather such vessels of wrath as *were to be fitted*. And, 2. by parity of reason it would follow, that the others should first be vessels of mercy, that is, such as have been actually made partakers of mercy, thro' faith, before they could be prepared for glory; and yet the apostle says, that even such vessels of mercy were *before prepared*.

8thly, They say, He hardeneth none, nor fitteth none for destruction, but the children of the flesh, or such as have abused his patience, and contumaciously refused the offers of mercy in Christ: But then, 1. he cannot be said to harden whom he will. 2. Hardness in part happeneth even to such as have not contumaciously resisted grace, as we see, Isa. lxiii. 17. If they mean by contumacy here, final contumacy, which certainly happeneth to such as are fitted for destruction, or which whoever are guilty of, shall certainly be hard-

ened, &c. then none can be so contumacious before they die, and then after death they cannot be hardened; and so to be hardened, and to be a vessel fitted for destruction, cannot be one and the same.

3. If he harden none but such contumacious persons, then (1.) he hardens none but such as hear the gospel; and (2.) the leaving of them in their natural condition should not be an act of obduration, for this is done before they become contumacious. (3.) Yea, contumaciousness followeth upon their obduration; for none can obey unless the hardness of their hearts be first removed; for hardness and an impenitent heart go together; Rom. ii. 5. and the not removing of this natural hardness of heart is an act of obduration. (4.) Yea, it will hence follow, that there are no infants, dying in infancy, fitted for destruction.

9thly, The apostle saith not, that God hardeneth the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, but that he endureth the vessels of wrath; and if they say, he hardeneth them by enduring them, then, 1. hardening must be meant of some act of God done in time, and of some temporal act; and must not be meant of final adjudging them to destruction, for there is no lenity used toward such as are once condemned in hell.

2. It is not one and the same thing to say, He endureth the vessels of wrath, and to say, he hardeneth them by enduring them; God's patience and lenity is one thing, and his hardening of them another thing; the one smells of mercy, and the other of wrath.

3. What this *hardening* of them by his lenity is, we cannot imagine by their doctrine, nor do they well explain it.

10thly, Nor doth the apostle say; that God hardeneth the vessels of wrath after he has endured them with great patience, but that he endureth the vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, for his own glory.

11thly, Nor doth the apostle say, that he gets the glory of his wrath and of his power in hardening of them, but rather in enduring of them with much patience.

12thly, How can that be; that God hardeneth them by his longanimity, and yet he hardeneth none but such as deserve it by abusing of this longanimity? thus he should harden them while he useth his patience, and yet not harden them till after; thus the same thing should be before and after itself, and he should endure none but such as he hath endured.

13thly, Tho' they pretend, that according to their exposition there is no objection more fully answered than this, yet we cannot find the doubt loosed. The doubt was this; Seeing the Lord hardeneth whom he will, and this hardness is a sin, how can he find fault with one who is so hardened? Now this doubt yet remains, for all that they have said: For be it so, that God hardeneth none but such as deserve it, yet he doth harden, and doth harden according to his will, which none can resist, and this same hardness is a sin, as well as a punishment; and so it may still yet be asked, why doth God find fault? or else it must be said that he finds no fault with such whom he hardeneth judicially, in so far as they are hardened.

But if any shall say, that the apostle's argument lieth thus; As the potter hath power over the clay, &c. so God hath much more power to endure with long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: I answer, I know Arminius saith so; but, 1. who doubteth of this? was this any question here? did ever any doubt but God might use his long-suffering and patience towards whom he pleased? And, 2. this being so easy a business, why did the apostle use such exclamations, *Who art thou, O man?* 3. What says this to the objection, *Why doth he yet find fault?* Sure it is no way suiting it, nor any answer thereto. 4. What likeness is in this similitude, The potter hath power to make of the same lump one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, therefore God hath power; to do what? to make one vessel

to honour, and another to dishonour? no such matters: what then? to endure the vessels of wrath with patience. It is strange, how men can please themselves with such dreams as these. 5. This exposition will, in many particulars, cross the former exposition, as will appear by comparing it with our reasons against the former; and will make a reddition where there is none to be found, as we shewed before. 6. When the objection was, Whether God can be angry justly at the hardened? it is no set answer which he makes, to say, it should rather have been asked, Whether he could justly harden such with whom he was angry? For (1.) there is no ground for this question; and (2.) there is some ground for the other, as we shewed. 7. When he formeth the objection thus, He who hardeneth by an irresistible will, cannot justly be angry at such who are hardened: But God hardeneth with an irresistible will; *Ergo*, &c. To the major he gives this answer, *viz.* That it is simply false; because they deserve to be hardened: But this says nothing to the point; for (1.) still they are hardened with an irresistible will: And (2.) it is not the question, Whether they be hardened justly or unjustly; but (3.) the question is, Whether, when they are hardened by an irresistible will, he can find fault with them, or make them liable to punishment for that same hardness which is inflicted, altho' deservedly? and his answer says nothing to this. To the minor he giveth this answer, That the apostle setteth down another way of hardening than by his irresistible will, *viz.* by enduring them with much lenity. But then, 1. they are hardened by a resistible will; and yet the apostle seemeth to grant that his will in this is irresistible. 2. How can this be a way of hardening, when it is but by accident, if hardness follow upon it? for it is at their own option, whether they will abuse God's patience or not.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. That way of explicating the doctrine of predeſtination, which ſuiteth moſt with carnal reaſon, and agrees moſt with its apprehenſions, is moſt to be ſuſpected as not being genuine, but ſpurious, and only the fruit of man's brain, for the apoſtle's way is not ſuch; as at the beginning he held it forth as a myſtery, ſo now in the cloſe of his explanation, he leaves it as a myſtery, as unſuitable to carnal apprehenſions as can be: *What if God willing to ſhew his wrath?*

II. Tho' miniſters ought to make the myſteries of God, which he has been pleaſed to reveal in his word, as plain to the capacities of people as may be; yet they ſhould ſo handle them, as to give a check unto the curioſity of vain men, that they pry not too far into theſe depths; and alſo leave an impreſſion in the hearts of their hearers, of their ſublimeneſs, that they may ſtill look upon them as myſteries, and be humble; as the apoſtle doth here, *What if God, willing to ſhew his wrath?* He ſpeaks of it all alongſt as a myſtery, and as a myſtery which none muſt curiouſly pry into beyond what is revealed.

III. However the Lord hath a holy, ſecret and efficacious hand in the actual hardening of the hearts of the reprobates; yet his external diſpenſations, whereby he ſheweth how good a God he is, and which ſhould win their hearts home, and whereby he makes offer of the goſpel, and of Chriſt in it, a mean whereby the hearts of others are melted and ſoftened, and whereby their hardneſs would be cured alſo, if it were not their own fault; theſe external diſpenſations, I ſay, being abuſed, and theſe offers being ſlighted, they cannot but have their mouths ſtoped before the Lord, and cry *Guilty*: And would we not pry into the ſecret will of God, which is out of our ſight, and not revealed but by the event, and look to his revealed will, whereby our duty is pointed forth, and then conſider,

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how we, willingly and freely, without any compulſion or external force, do tranſgreſs his laws, we ſhould ſee juſt cauſe why the Lord ſhould be angry with us, and puniſh us according to juſtice, notwithſtanding of any ſtanding decree determining the event, which conſiſteth well with the liberty of man's free will, yea, and rather helpeth than pincheth the ſame; for this is the laſt answer unto the objection, *Why doth he find fault?* that man doth ſinfully and willingly abuſe God's goodneſs, and turn his grace into wantonneſs: this is clearly held forth, in that he ſays, he *endured with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath*; he extended much patience, but all in vain.

IV. The ſerious conſideration of God's abſolute ſovereignty, and freedom to do what he thinks fit for the glory of his own name, and the glorious manifeſtation and declaration of his attributes, ſhould for ever ſtop the mouths of all perſons whatſoever, who ſeem to be diſcontented with the matter of predeſtination; and though thereby we ſhould imagine that God was doing us wrong, yet the thoughts of the Lord's holy intention ſhould for ever check us; ſeeing he is driving at his own honour and glory in all that buſineſs, and hath contrived it ſo, as that thereby he ſhall have the glory of his attributes: therefore ſays he, *What if God, willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, &c.* what can we object to the contrary?

V. God, for his own holy ends, hath foreordained ſome to everlaſting life, and others unto everlaſting death; for we hear of ſome *veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction*, and ſome *veſſels of mercy before prepared unto glory*.

VI. The Lord was not moved to elect any to life eternal and glory, by the conſideration of faith or good works, or any thing in them, or to be in them; nor did he ordain any unto everlaſting death becauſe of their evil deeds foreſeen; for the *veſſels of wrath* are ſaid to be *fitted to deſtruction*, before they abuſed the patience

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and longanimity of God; and the vessels of mercy are said to be prepared before unto glory.

VII. Albeit the Lord was not moved to reprobate any, and appoint them unto death, by the foresight of their sinfulness; yet in that act he did not exclude all thoughts of sin, as tho' he had appointed so many to death and destruction whether they were sinners or not; but, as he appointed that certainly such and such should perish, so he appointed that certainly they should perish through their own sinfulness and evil deservings: for though the vessels of wrath were fitted to destruction, yet before the actual execution of this decree, he endured them with much long-suffering; *he endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.*

VIII. The Lord certainly knoweth who are the elect and who are the reprobate, in particular; for the one are said to be fitted to destruction, and the other prepared unto glory.

IX. As the holy One of Israel did fore-ordain his elect unto life, as that in due time he effectually wrought, to the actual bringing about of the same; so did he ordain others unto death, so as that certainly the same individual persons condescended on should actually and inevitably perish: for, as the vessels of mercy are said to be prepared unto glory, so the vessels of wrath are said to be fitted to destruction. The Lord has a holy hand in bringing that business about, and an active hand also, tho' it be a mystery to us.

X. Tho' the Lord did from all eternity elect so many unto life, and purposed effectually to bring them to the possession of glory; yet he thought fit to contrive the business so, as that, in their salvation and glorification, free grace and mercy should shine forth conspicuously: hence the elect are called *vessels of mercy*; and much mercy do they get on this side of time.

XI. As the Lord purposeth to manifest and declare his vindictive justice, in the fi-

nal destruction and overthrow of the reprobate; so, even in time, matters are so carried on, as that they lie under his actual displeasure, and oftentimes meet with the bitter fruits of his wrath: for, for this cause are they called *vessels of wrath*; all they get is the fruit of wrath.

XII. Tho' it be a groundless speech, and a speech favouring ill, to say, that God created man for this end and purpose, that he might destroy him; yet this is truth that God created man and permitted him to sin, and to go on in his sin, and because of his sin punished him with death; or purposed and decreed to do all this for the glory of his vindictive wrath and justice: *being willing to shew his wrath, he endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath.*

XIII. The ultimate end which moved God to appoint some of his own creatures to everlasting life, and others to everlasting death, was the glory of his own name alienably; and that he might make his divine attributes to shine forth, he took this course, and for this end he contrived the whole business, and appointed the whole carrying on of the same, both as to the elect and reprobate, so as might most conduce for the manifestation and declaration of his attributes: this is his end, and all the rest are but as one complete mean for this end: *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, &c.*

XIV. Howbeit the wicked reprobate wretches enjoy much pleasure and contentment in the earth, and a sweet life as they think, yet their end shall be inevitable ruin and destruction; for they are fitted to destruction.

XV. Tho' the chosen children of God may have a hard and bitter life on this side of time, and meet with many sad and bitter dispensations; yet the upshot of all shall be glory, and they at length shall be put in possession of glory; for they are prepared unto glory.

XVI. Albeit the Lord who is every way

way perfect, even perfection itself, be free of all passions whatsoever, and so cannot be properly said to be angry, as it is a passion and a human frailty; yet is he really displeased at sin, and doth that in effect to impenitent sinners which men, when angry, use to do to those they are angry at; therefore we hear of *his wrath*, or his vindictive justice.

XVII. The Lord gets the glory and honour of his vindictive justice in hating and punishing sin, when he actually sends the reprobate to destruction, and for this cause he took this course, being *willing to shew his wrath*.

XVIII. As he gets the glory of his justice and displeasure against sin, by punishing the rebellious and obstinate sinners; so he gets the glory of his power in laying them low; for notwithstanding of all their power and grandeur he can bring them down, and lay them in the dust: for it is added, *and to make his power known*.

XIX. Albeit the Lord purposed to shew forth his power and vindictive justice in taking vengeance on the workers of iniquity; yet he thought fit, not immediately, upon the back of their transgression, to execute his vengeance and wrath, but to forbear many of them, and to exercise much patience and longanimity towards them; therefore *he endures with much long-suffering many of the vessels of wrath*.

XX. Whatever patience and longanimity God be exercising towards the reprobate, and whatever favour or courtesy he be shewing them, yet such is their natural pravity and wicked disposition, that nothing of that kind will gain them, but they will prove still more and more obstinate and perverse; for notwithstanding that the Lord *endures them with much long-suffering*, yet these *vessels of wrath* are such as God will certainly *shew his wrath* upon.

XXI. However the wicked may dream that God carrieth great love and affection towards them, and has a purpose to save them for ever, because he doth not imme-

diately cut them off for their wickedness, but beareth long with them in patience, yet their imaginations are but groundless, for notwithstanding thereof God may have thoughts of evil towards such, even such as God *endureth with much long-suffering* may be *vessels of wrath*, for all that.

XXII. Albeit that graceless wretches may imagine, that because the Lord doth not cut them off in the very act of their sin and iniquity, that therefore either he doth approve of their courses, and so will not take course with them according to justice; or else, if he hate and abhor their ways, is not able to execute his wrath upon them; yet they are fools in so reasoning, for that is the high way for the Lord to manifest both his wrath and his power; and the more patient he has been, and his patience abused, the more will his wrath and power appear; for that he might *shew his wrath, and make his power known, he endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, &c.*

XXIII. As in the reprobate the Lord gets the glory of his vindictive justice and wrath; so in the elect he gets the glory of his goodness, mercy and free grace, which is glorious every way and excellent, being free, matchless, and incomparable, standing at no impediment, but coming over all mountains of sin and provocation: *And that he might make known the riches of his glory*; that is, of his grace and goodness, wherein he sheweth himself glorious and excellent: See Eph. i. 12.

XXIV. God's grace and free love which he makes known towards the vessels of mercy, is an incomprehensible ocean, and an inexpressible fountain, which is sufficient for passing over all the transgressions and iniquities of his people, how great and heinous soever they be, and that not of one or two, but of all the elect without exception; for it is here called *the riches of his glory*, as being an everlasting treasure.

XXV. The Lord hath an active hand

of providence about sin, and it falleth not out against his will, whereby he determineth of events, but according to his permissive will, and he hath decreed that it should exist thro' his permission; for, 1. *the vessels of wrath* are said to be *fitted to destruction*; and certainly they cannot otherways be fitted but by sin, and so when God fits them he must have an active hand about it. 2. The elect are called *vessels of mercy*, and this supposeth sin. And, 3. he proposed such ends to himself as could not be effectuated if sin had not existed; and so seeing he drove at such ends, not uncertainly, it must needs follow, that as he willed the end, so he willed the means to exist, *viz.* by his permission, whereby that end might be attained. Now, the end was (1.) that he might *make known his wrath*; vindictive justice cannot be made known unless sin exist. (2.) That he might make known his *patience*; and this requireth sin also: And (3.) *the riches of his glorious grace*, in pardoning; and pardoning mercy doth always presuppose sin.

VERSES 24. 25. 26. *Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.*

As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her, beloved, which was not beloved.

And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called, The children of the living God.

THE apostle being now about to speak of the rejection of the Jews, and of the taking in of the Gentiles, upon the occasion of an objection mentioned in the beginning of this chapter; and because both these truths were such as the Jews had a great prejudice against, and could never hear with good-will, therefore the apostle walketh more warily, and handleth the fore tenderly: and therefore, as we shewed at the beginning of the chapter, he was

both directly and positively to have asserted their rejection, so now (after he has removed that which seemed to be the ground of their prejudice, both against the one and the other, *viz.* their carnal privileges through, and interest in, Abraham, which the apostle has shown to be null, and that without any impeachment of God, his justice and truth,) he comes to speak of both their rejection, and the taking in of the Gentiles, more expressly; and still he walks tenderly and prudently when he toucheth this harsh and unpleasant string, both in the way of handling of it, as we will see, and in the timing of his discourse. For having abundantly cleared the Lord's supreme authority and power over all flesh, to make them vessels of wrath, or of mercy, as he thinks fit, for his own glory, they could not but see it most clear, that seeing he has power to appoint some to everlasting life, and others to destruction, much more has he power to unchurch a people, and denude them of these external privileges which once they enjoyed, and privilege others with them; now he thinks fit to strike in, and upon this occasion to mention the matter: and because the matter of their rejection was what they stumbled most at, therefore he leaves that last, and speaks first to the taking in of the Gentiles, and that with knitting these verses to the former discourse, *Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*: As if he had said, You see that the Lord makes choice of some to be vessels of mercy, and prepares them for glory, for the manifestation of the riches of his grace, and all this according to his own good will and pleasure: And if you ask, who these are, or how they shall be known? they are such as he calleth both outwardly and inwardly, be they Jews, be they Gentiles; he is not tied to the Jewish nation, but taketh some of the Gentiles also, and some of the Jews, according as seemeth good in his eyes.

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Now, when he has thus laid down his proposition, That effectual calling belongeth to the Gentiles no less than to the Jews; he confirmeth it by two proofs brought out of Hosea: the first is out of the last verse of chapter ii. where the apostle followeth the Seventy with a little change, and suitable enough to the original; for thus it runs, *I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy, or upon Lo-rubamah*: and the seventy render it thus, *I will love her whom I had not loved*: but all is one, for the verb signifieth both, *he hath mercy*, and *he loved heartily, intimately, with bowels of affection*. The next is out of chapter i. 10. In which places, tho' the prophet does not name the Gentiles; yet the apostle doth rightly alledge these testimonies: for the prophet being threatening sad and terrible judgments against Israel, for their idolatry, is mixing in, and adding some sweet and comfortable promises, (according to his usual manner) for bearing up of the hearts of any truly godly among them; and (as is not unusual with the prophets of old, to do, when about to comfort the truly godly in their days) prophesieth of the enlarging of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the latter days, when the number of the true Israel should be as the sand of the sea (which was never verified of these ten tribes, which were taken away by the Assyrians) then shall the Gentiles, that were *not beloved*, but *Lo-rubamah*, be stiled, *the beloved of God*; and these who were *Lo-ammi*, be stiled, *my people*; and in the place, even out of the land of Judea, where it was said, *Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God*. And so there is here a clear prophecy of the inbringing of the Gentiles; and so a clear proof of the apostle's assertion; and his expression, in alledging these places, is observable; for he would not have them looking on the matter as only asserted by him, but as the mind of the Lord; and

therefore brings in the places thus, *And he saith in Osee*; as the Lord speaketh in that prophecy.

From verse 24. OBSERVE,

I. Though we should not conceal any thing of the truth of the Lord, which he warranteth us to make known, whoever be displeased thereat; yet there is a holy prudence to be used even in the very timing of the delivery of these truths, and not to do it when, in all likelihood, it will but exasperate the people, but when they are so broken to the truth, by hearing of somewhat before spoken, upon another occasion, and clearly held forth, which will abundantly confirm that which is to be said, and against which they cannot except; then to come in with the truth when the ice is fairly broken, and the hearers as it were settled, as the apostle doth here, upon the back of his doctrine touching election and reprobation, he brings in the matter of the calling of the Gentiles, and casting off of the Jews, saying, *Even us whom he hath called, &c.*

II. The Lord's everlasting love and goodwill, which he hath to the vessels of mercy, whom he hath foreordained unto glory, lieth under ground, and the first breaking up of it is in effectual calling; when this electing love first appeareth, it warmeth the heart of the poor soul, and draweth him in to Christ powerfully and irresistibly: *even us whom he hath called*.

III. The elect being as wicked and malicious by nature as any, being dead in sin, Eph. ii. 1. slaves to the devil, Eph. ii. 2. and to their own corruptions, Tit. iii. 3. no less than others, and having as strong an enmity at Christ and his ways as the rest; neither will, nor can come in to the Lord Jesus of themselves, but ly still in their natural condition, and take complacency therein, resolving never to change; till God come and work a change, who only can prevail with stubborn people, and make them *willing in the day of his power*.

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Plat. cx. 3. and sendeth forth his word, and quickeneth them. It is a work peculiarly belonging to the Lord, to draw his own home to Christ, John vi. 44. therefore it is said, *Even us whom he hath called.*

IV. Whosoever the Lord has elected from eternity, and set his love upon, these he so draweth and worketh upon, as that not only they become professors of Christianity, and members of his visible church; but also being convinced of their own lost condition by nature, and of a remedy only by Christ; and being persuaded of Christ's willingness to embrace such, are constrained to lay hold on him, having faith wrought in their hearts, and so to obey the call of the gospel: for the vessels of mercy are such as he will soon or late call; *Even us whom he hath called.*

V. Believers in Christ may win to the assurance of their interest in the Lord's electing love, and know that they are one of the vessels of mercy prepared unto glory: for the apostle puts in himself among the rest, saying, *Even us whom he hath called.*

VI. The way to know, whether we be elected or chosen of God, or not, is not to go search into the secret and hid cabinet of God's counsel at the first; but by searching, whether or not we be effectually called, and the offers of Christ in the gospel have been heartily welcomed by us: effectual and inward calling is the best character and surest mark of a chosen vessel of grace; for the apostle would have us hereby trying our election, in saying, *Even us whom he hath called.*

VII. The Lord, in setting his electing love on sinners, and in making the same to appear in due time, is not carried by external motives, nor doth he shew more respect to such as are privileged with external advantages and church-privileges: such do not sway his eternal love and affection, but he sets the same upon whomsoever he pleaseth, be they Jew or Gen-

tile: *Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.*

VIII. Tho' under the law, the Lord made particular choice of the seed of Abraham, to be his peculiar people, excluding the body of the Gentiles; yet at length in the latter days, when *the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, all nations shall flow unto it,* Isa. ii. 2. and there is an open door made to all nations, *the partition wall being taken down,* Eph. ii. 14. and the Gentiles, who were before accursed, are taken in, Eph. iii. 6. therefore says he, *Not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.*

From Verses 25. 26. OBSERVE,

I. In confirming the truths which we bring forth unto people, as we would produce testimonies out of the word of the Lord, which is only able to satisfy; so we should alledge scripture, so as the people we have to do with may see that it is not our word, nor us, they have to do with, when we reprove their sins, point forth their duties, or clear questioned truths, but the Lord alone who is speaking so and so in his word: therefore says the apostle, *As he (that is the Lord) saith also in Hosea.*

II. We never look right upon the scriptures, nor use them edifyingly, till we see and perceive the Lord speaking and pointing out unto us what is there held forth; and whatsoever is there set down, is the real mind of God, being uttered by his servants, who were inspired by him, and spoke as they were acted by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet i. 25. therefore saith he, *As he saith also in Hosea.*

III. The Lord may have thoughts and purposes of good towards a people, long and many a day before he begin to make the same to appear; and notwithstanding of any long delay which he maketh, or of multitudes of impediments that come in the way, so as it seemeth many a time to
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flesh and blood, carnal reason and sense, a thing altogether improbable, that ever such thoughts of good-will should take effect; yet in his own time he will come, according to his promise and purpose: for now, in the days of the gospel, he is calling the Gentiles, according to his promise of old made by Hosea; *As he saith also in Osee.*

IV. Whatever the thoughts of good be, which the Lord carrieth to the vessels of mercy, whom he has a purpose to glorify with himself; yet, till the Lord come and draw them out of their natural condition, and bring them in to Christ, and unite them to him in their effectual calling, their case and condition is most miserable and sad, for they are not his privileged people, nor favoured and respected of him as his *peculiar people, and chosen generation*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. but are *aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, and without God*, as theirs in a saving manner, Eph. ii. 12: nor are they favoured with the sweet fruits and effects of his fatherly love and beneficence; his fatherly bowels of compassion doth not so yearn towards them, however they be meeting with many common mercies and external favours with the rest of his creatures; for, *before they were Lo-ammi, and not his people, and were not beloved.*

V. The condition of believers in Christ is most happy and blessed, having now a near relation unto God, as theirs by covenant, and being his people and subjects, under his fatherly care and tuition, having him their father, and a father full of compassion and bowels of pity and mercy towards them, meeting daily with the fruits thereof from him in all his dispensations; they are now *his people*, and called and accounted so by himself, and *beloved*, yea, and *children of the living God.*

VI. Believers have a near and a close relation to the God of heaven and earth, who is a living God, able to quicken them when they are sinking, and encourage them when they are fainting, and to deli-

ver them in all their straits and difficulties; and a God who will never fail his own, being still the same unchangeable Jehovah: they are called, *The children of the living God.*

VII. This sweet and excellent change is wrought by faith in Jesus Christ, and closing with him according to the tenor of the covenant, and obeying his voice in the gospel: for only such as are effectually called meet with this real relative change.

VIII. However the truly godly, in a place, may lie under many reproaches, and be slandered as hypocrites, or opposed and maligned because of their piety, and so be holden in little account and estimation; yet this may comfort them, that whatever they have been before the Lord brought them home, yet the Lord accounts highly of them, and owneth them as his: for it is said, *I will call them my people, and beloved, and they shall be called, The children of the living God.*

IX. How profane, naughty, and graceless soever a place hath been, and how infamous soever for wickedness and Atheism; yet that will not hinder the Lord from being gracious to that people, when the time of love dawneth: For even in the place where it was said, *Ye are not my people; there shall they be called, The children of the living God.*

VERSES 27. 28. 29. *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.*

For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

NOW, in the next place, the apostle comes to speak particularly and more plainly of the rejection of the Jews; and

and because they had a prejudice against him, and looked upon him as a professed enemy of their nation; therefore he useth a holy art in carrying on his point: For, first, he will not speak of this truth in the first place, lest he should embitter their spirits, but after he has cleared the in-bringing of the Gentiles: And next, he sheweth the same not to be any doctrine of his, so much as the mind of the Spirit of the Lord; and therefore he brings in the prophet Isaiah, speaking of this long before, and thereby tacitely checketh them for their ignorance of the truth revealed by the prophet, and unacquaintedness with his mind; *Esaias also crieth*, saith he: this expression he useth, to waken their attention, and also to shew, that the prophet was earnest and serious in holding forth this truth of old; and that their predecessors, with whom Isaiah was dealing, had a prejudice against that truth, no less than they. So, to this purpose, the apostle citeth two places out of Isaiah; the one is, chapter x. 22. 23. the other is, chapter i. 9. In the first he followeth the Seventy's interpretation, which was then the most usual version, tho' it varieth from the original Hebrew, and seemeth rather to render the sense, than the words in the original, because that did nothing hinder his purpose; seeing the main thing for which it was cited, which is here set down, verse 27. and Isa. x. 22. is rightly rendered. So then, in the first place, the prophet declareth, that God was to bring such a judgment and plague upon them by the Assyrians, that should leave few of them behind, even *though their number were as the sand of the sea*; a hyperbolical, proverbial speech, pointing forth an innumerable multitude, as we see, Judges vii. 12. Isa. xlvi. 19. *A remnant should be saved*; or but a remnant, and that because *the Lord will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; and a short work will the Lord make upon the earth*; that is, after his lenity and good-

ness have been abused long, he will put an end to his controversy which he has been pleading with them long, and will now enter into strict judgment with them, and contend with them in anger, and will therefore send a consumption, a decreed consumption, a judgment that shall certainly and inevitably come to pass; and shall overflow like a flood the whole land, and that in righteousness; that is, in his just and righteous judgment; and so he will make a short work, or a short account of the business, thro' the whole land. Again, he says, *And as Esaias said before*, viz. chapter i. 9. *Except the Lord of zabaath*, that is, the Lord of hosts; the apostle still followeth the Seventy, who keep the word *zabaath*, as being then commonly used; *had left us a seed*, or, as it is in the Hebrew, *a very small remnant*, a handful, as the seed in comparison of the whole crop: *we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha*; we should have been utterly ruined and consumed, as these cities were, Gen. xix. 24. 25. Now, by these two places, the apostle abundantly proveth, that it is no uncouth thing to see the Jews in such a condition; that notwithstanding of all their carnal enjoyments and privileges, there shall be but a remnant of them that should meet with mercy, the bulk and generality being cut off; and these external deliverances being types of a spiritual delivery in and thro' Christ the true Messiah, sheweth, that there should be only a remnant, and a seed left, and saved, the generality being unchurched for their rejecting of the Messiah.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. When people, thro' prejudice at the minister, are in hazard to reject truth to their own disadvantage; ministers should be careful so to lay out truths, as that the people might see they had God immediately to deal with; as the apostle doth here, saying, *Esaias also crieth*; as if he had said, It is not I that say this, but Isaiah the

the prophet, againſt whom you can have no prejudice nor exception.

II. As the word of the Lord is a complete and perfect rule, able to direct us in all caſes, and to clear all doubts, and confirm all neceſſary truths; ſo the determination thereof is only able to ſatisfy and ſettle the ſoul, and thither ought we to appeal, as to the final decider of controverſies: thus doth the apoſtle; as he proved the inbringing of the Gentiles by ſcripture, ſo doth he prove thereby the out-caſting of the Jews, ſaying, *Eſaias alſo crieth concerning Iſrael.*

III. Altho' the ſcripture, being a certain and ſure rule, have but one ſenſe and meaning, whether it point forth truth in figurative expreſſions, or in proper, and ſo no way ambiguous; yet we may look further than to the thing ſignified immediately by the words, and conſider ſomething aimed at by the very purpoſe, and held forth by way of a type; yet ought we not to feign types when we pleaſe, but thus to look upon the word of God, when we have clear warrant in the word: for the apoſtle, in proving the unchurching of the Jews, citeth places which do immediately ſpeak of temporal judgments and deliverances; and thereby gives us to underſtand, that the Lord's diſpenſation in theſe external matters, pointed forth typically his diſpenſations in ſpiritual things, when he ſays, *As Eſaias alſo crieth concerning Iſrael.*

IV. Tho' one testimony of ſcripture be ſufficient to confirm a point of truth, God always being the God of truth, and one who cannot lie; yet, in handling of truths againſt which people have a prejudice, and can hardly be moved to drink in, it is neceſſary to ſhew how abundant the ſcripture is in confirming the ſame: as the apoſtle doth, when pointing forth this neceſſary point of truth; he citeth two ſeveral paſſages out of Iſajah, *as Eſaias alſo crieth*; and again, *as Eſaias ſaid before, &c.*

V. Tho' ſuch copies of the word as are

written in the original language in which the word was firſt written, be only authentic, ſo as they ought laſt to be appealed to; yet ſuch translations as are commonly received as current among the people, may be uſed, tho' they do not quadrate perfectly with the true original, providing they do not croſs the original; for the apoſtle citeth the Seventy's translation, becauſe it was then moſt in uſe, tho' there be ſome diſcrepancy betwixt it and the true Hebrew, even in the place cited.

From the places cited OBSERVE,

I. It becometh the ſervants of the Lord to be free and faithful in delivering their meſſage, to be ſerious and bold alſo, fearing no ſhame; and however people be dull of hearing, and as ill to drink in any truth as if they were deaf; yet miniſters muſt not forbear upon that account, but be the more earneſt in inculcating truths, as the prophet did here, who is ſaid to cry, *Eſaias alſo crieth*; crying importeth all this.

II. Tho' a people were never ſo puſt up with a vain conceit of their own riches and honours, as to privileges and external enjoyments; yet they ought not to be ſpared and forbore: but notwithstanding of all their fair ſhews and flouriſhes, and many enjoyments, yet their condition and hazard muſt be faithfully laid before their eyes: *Eſaias crieth concerning Iſrael.*

III. When God is once pleading a controverſy with a people, there will be no multitudes able to deliver them out of his hand: *I thought the number of the children of Iſrael were as the ſand of the ſea, yet ſhall but a remnant be ſaved.*

IV. Tho' God will ſuffer many things at the hand of his people, and will exerciſe much lenity, patience, and tendereſs towards them; yet when his forbearance is abuſed, and his grace turned into wantonneſs, he will at length draw out the ſword, and take a ſharp courſe with the workers of iniquity, and make up his delay by doubling his ſtrokes and haſten-

ing their destruction; *He will finish the work, and cut it short; and a short work will he make upon the earth.*

V. How sharp and sad soever God's dealings be with his own people, whom he is about to chastise, and howbeit they be ready to have hard thoughts of God's dealings, as if he were too rigorous and unjust; yet all his judgments are executed in righteousness; when he makes a short work, it is in righteousness: *he will cut it short in righteousness.* See Psal. ix. 8. Neh. ix. 33. Lam. i. 18.

VI. When God is about to execute his anger against a people for their iniquities, he can send a rod which shall make their strength soon decay and come to a hair, and their multitudes melt like snow before the sun, like a consumption weakening them daily; and when he is sending a rod, which, like an inundation, is overflowing a whole land, sparing no ranks or conditions of people; even then it is ruled by a sure decree, which it cannot overpass, and conveyed in righteousness, so as none have any just cause to complain at the Lord's doing: for thus we read it in the original, *The consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness; the Lord will make a consumption determined in all the land; his stroke may be a consumption, and a consumption overflowing, and yet overflowing in righteousness, being a consumption decreed.*

VII. The Lord Jehovah is supreme Governor of heaven and earth, Master of all the militia and forces there, and can make use of all his creatures in heaven and earth, and of the most feckless of them as an army, wherewith to prevail over proud enemies; he, *as the Lord of hosts, or of sabaoth*, ordering and disposing of all armies as he thinks fit, being the great Generalissimo, making even such forces as are employed against his people and work, promote his design. See Gen. xxxii. 1. Jos. x. 11. Psal. lxxviii. 17.

VIII. Whenever God is delivering us

from imminent destruction, or an overflowing scourge, and pulling out any as brands from the fire, as Amos iv. 11. Zech. iii. 2. we should take him up as manifesting his almighty power, that his mercy may bulk more in our eyes, and we may be made more thankful: therefore says he, *Except the Lord of hosts had left us a seed.*

IX. God may be so provoked to anger by the carriage of his people, as to cut off the body and bulk of a nation, and leave but very few considerable persons behind, by sword, famine, and pestilence, and other ordinary rods: there was here but a small remnant left, as the seed in comparison of the crop; *Except the Lord had left us a seed.*

X. It is a great mercy, that when God draweth forth the sword of his anger to execute his vengeance upon sinners, that ever he should sheath the same, until he hath made an utter end of them, that there should not be so much as a remnant left; and how sore soever God strike his own, it is a mercy that he puts any difference betwixt them and his enemies, whom he maketh examples of his fury for ever: *Except the Lord had left us a seed, we had been like unto Sodom and Gomorrah.*

XI. When God's face is begun to shine upon his people, after he has chastised them for their iniquities, then any little mercy they meet with, how small soever it be, will prove an inlet into, and arles of more, and be as a door of hope unto them: for that which Isaiah calleth *a very small remnant*, the apostle calleth it *a seed*; saying, *unless he had left us a seed; and seed is the beginning of more.* See Hos. ii. 14. 15.

VERSES 30. 31. 32. *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith:*

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

Where-

Wherefore? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.

IN this last part of the chapter, the apostle doth further confirm and illustrate the purpose he was upon, viz. the calling in of the Gentiles, and rejecting of the Jews, by giving the grounds and reasons of both; which he layeth forth in answering an objection which he proposeth to be cleared. The objection is not only proposed, but further strengthened, by adding what seemed to fortify the same, *What shall we say then?* Or, the objection is this, How can it be that the Gentiles, a cursed nation, a people *which followed not after righteousness*, had no regard thereof, but detained the truth in unrighteousness, and lived in all lasciviousness, should be taken within the covenant and church, and should be made partakers of a righteousness which should do their turn, and carry them to heaven; and the Jews who were most zealous of the law, they *followed after the law of righteousness*, and were at great pains to conform themselves unto the law, which prescribed righteousness, and promised life unto the perfect keepers thereof, and so laboured for that righteousness required; and yet have come short of the mark, and never could attain unto justification, nor to that righteousness by which people are justified; *they have not attained unto the law of righteousness*, they have lost their reward, and are now upchurched? To this seeming paradox, the apostle answereth, by giving the true reason both of the one and of the other: And, 1. he gives a reason, why the Gentiles came speed, and got that which the Jews could not get, verse 30. in these words, *Even the righteousness which is of faith*; that is, there was a righteousness offered them who had none of their own, and this they gripped by faith; Christ and his righteousness was offered unto them, and

him they accepted with all their heart. And, 2. The reason, why the Jews were rejected for all their pains, is, (1.) *because they sought it not by faith; but,* (2.) *as it were by the works of the law*; that is, they ran all wrong, they rested upon their own righteousness, and thought by the works of the law to win to a perfect righteousness, which should satisfy justice, and do their turn, and so would never come out of themselves to lay hold upon the offers of a Mediator; and the ground of all is added, *because they stumbled at that stumbling-stone*; that is, they stumbled at Christ, and the way of justification thro' him; he proved, thro' their own folly, a stumbling-stone to them, on which they fell, and brake their own necks.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. All by nature are void of that righteousness with which we must appear before God, and by which we must be justified and saved, being altogether guilty, and liable to the wrath and vengeance of God: the *Gentiles*, by nature, *do not* so much as *follow after righteousness*; and the Jews, or *Israel*, *do not attain unto the law of righteousness*.

II. This righteousness by which alone all are accepted, be they Jew or Gentile, is a righteousness of another, a righteousness imputed, a righteousness received by faith, closing a bargain with Christ, who is our righteousness; it is *a righteousness which is of faith*.

III. Though none by nature can do any thing to satisfy justice, or purchase a righteousness to themselves; yet vain man will be trying his own way: Though now the covenant of works be broken, and life can never be had by it again; yet such is the pride of the heart, that he would still be at the old way, and out of God's common, to speak so: for *Israel* is here *seeking the law of righteousness by the works of the law*.

IV. There are none more ready to re-

ject God's way of salvation by faith in Christ, and to cleave to the way by their own works, than such as are within the visible church, and privileged of God beyond others, and should be better acquainted with their own impotency, having more means of information than others. For even *Israel sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.*

V. Men and women may be at great pains, and toil much for heaven, yea, and may out-strip others far in aiming at heaven, and in external duties, and yet come short of the prize; much may many do, and continue long in doing; and yet shoot short of the crown: *Israel did not attain to the law of righteousness, though they followed after the law of righteousness; much pains were they at in keeping the moral, judicial, and ceremonial law, and yet all in vain.*

VI. Such is the way to life and communion with God, revealed in the new covenant, viz. by faith in Christ offered in the gospel; that whoever shall betake themselves thereto, and fly in to Christ, trusting to him altogether, shall certainly be saved, whatever vile and abominable wretches they have been before: for even *the Gentiles, and such Gentiles too, as followed not after righteousness, have attained to that righteousness which is by faith.*

VII. So ready are people, who have attained to any outward civility and shew of religion, to rest upon the same; that whoremongers, adulterers, and such lewd and profane wretches will be more ready to come out of themselves, and to accept of the offer of Christ, than they; and will enter into the kingdom of heaven, before such as are not far therefrom; so the Gentiles come better speed than the Jews: *The Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to it; when Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, have not attained to the law of righteousness.*

VIII. It seemeth a great paradox unto such

as measure the ways of the infinitely wise God by their own apprehensions, to hear that prophane ruffians may out-strip such as seem to themselves to be near heaven; but if we considered how the way to heaven and righteousness is by faith alone, the paradox would vanish: *What shall we say then? that the Gentiles, &c.*

IX. The seeking of righteousness by the works of the law, and by faith in Christ, are so diametrically opposite and irreconcilable, that they cannot be united; but whosoever seeketh righteousness by the one, misseth it; and whosoever seeketh the same by the other, obtaineth it: *Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.*

X. Whoever seek righteousness by the works of the law, do reject Jesus Christ, and wage war against him, and stumble at him: For, *they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.*

XI. The cause why the Lord unchurched the people of the Jews, was, because they rejected the Messiah, and would not have him to reign over them, but stumbled at that stumbling-stone: for this is the reason why the Jews were excommunicated, *because they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.*

VERSE 33. *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone, and a rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed.*

BECAUSE what he said last, touching Christ, might seem strange and harsh, viz. that he should be a stone of stumbling, who is the only means of salvation, and one on whom many should stumble and fall, and never rise again, therefore he confirms the same out of several passages of Isaiah, saying, *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone, and a rock of offence; where he joins two places together, viz. Isa. viii. 14. and xxviii. 16. In the first it is only thus, And he shall be*

be for a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; and in the next it is said, *Behold, I lay in Zion*; and so cleareth, that in both places Christ the Messias is spoken of; and he is said to be *laid in Zion*, that is, in the church, whereof Zion was a type; a stone of stumbling, that is, a stone lying in folks way, which strikes the feet and makes them halt, and hurts them, Jer. vi. 21. and not only so, but a rock of offence, that is, such a stumbling-block as he that stumbleth at it shall not win over, but shall, as a vessel by a rock, be dashed to pieces, and driven backward.

Then, lest this should have faded the hearts of the godly, he adds a word out of the forecited Isa. xxviii. 16. *And whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed*; therein following the Seventy, for in the Hebrew it is thus, *He that believeth shall not make haste*: but all cometh to one; for he who is ashamed and confounded, or put through-other, makes haste, and doth not his business with deliberation, but precipitately: This is added, I say, to comfort the hearts of the godly, who might possibly fall a trembling when they hear that he is a stone of stumbling, and be afraid to come near him; and therefore he says, Tho' he be a stone of stumbling to some, yet such as will come unto him, and roll themselves over on him, shall never be confounded; they shall not be the worse of that, but much the better.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Whatever expressions we have of Christ, at which ill-willers are ready to take up hard thoughts, should be well guarded and backed with scripture, that so if enemies will have hard thoughts of Christ upon any such ground, they may see that they justle against the word; therefore says he, *As it is written*, this is the expression of the Spirit of the Lord, *Behold I lay in Zion*, &c.

II. Tho' Jesus Christ be precious in himself, being *the chief among ten thousand*,

Song v. 10. and worthy of all-acceptation; yet many thro' the corruption of their own hearts, take up a prejudice at him, his ways, ordinances, and followers, and reject salvation in and through him; thus he is a *stumbling-stone* to many, and they stumble at him: *Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone*.

III. Even in the church of God, where most of Christ is revealed and manifested, his excellency and beauty most held forth, there are many that stumble at him, and take up a prejudice to their own destruction: *Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling*.

IV. Among many things which occasion the stumbling of many at Christ, this is one, that if they lay hold on him, and follow his way, they must renounce their own righteousness, and come quite out of themselves, and expect salvation through the righteousness of another, which their spirits cannot condescend unto; they sought righteousness by the works of the law, and therefore they *stumbled at that stumbling-stone*, verse 32. and it is such as believe not who stumble: *Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling, and they that believe, shall not be confounded*.

V. God hath a holy and sinless hand in the stumbling of the wicked at Jesus Christ; it is not an accident that falleth out beyond his expectation, but according to his determination and appointment: *Behold, I lay in Zion*, saith the Lord, *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, &c. See 1 Pet. ii. 8.

VI. Notwithstanding of this secret and holy counsel of God, determining of the existence of sinful events, and laying a stumbling-stone in Zion; yet is God, who infuseth no evil in man, James i. 13. free of their guilt who stumble; and Christ is not the cause thereof, being in some kind passive, and they themselves are guilty before God, because they willingly reject the counsel of the Lord, and dash themselves upon the rock; for tho' the Lord hath *laid*

a stumbling block in Zion, yet it is sinners own fault that they stumble at him, for to such as *believe on him* he is no stumbling-stone, but such *are not confounded*; and still he is but a *stone of stumbling*, a stone on which men, in their drunken and furious mood, stumble; and a rock on which vessels, thro' the ignorance or wilfulness of their pilots, do split: *Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling.*

VII. Whoever within the visible church do not rest their burden wholly on Christ Jesus, whatever parts and flourishes of seeming grace they have, to such Christ shall be the blackest sight that ever they saw; they shall stumble on him and fall, and never rise again: to such he will not only be a *stone of stumbling*, but also a *rock of offence*, on which they shall split and dash in pieces.

VIII. As all the works of the Lord are wonderful, and his dispensations, both one way and another, worthy of serious thoughts; so also the depths of his wisdom, in the holding forth the only means of salvation, so as some embrace the same, and others stumble thereat and break their necks; therefore is there a *behold* prefixed, *Behold, I lay in Zion, &c.*

IX. Whatever sad and heavy truths unto the godless and profane wretches, the ministers of the gospel be handling, yet they should use such discretion and wisdom in dispensing the word of God, as that the godly may not be discouraged or disheartened, but great tenderness should be used towards, and respect shown to them; they should be faithful stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and dividers of the word aright, 2 Tim. ii. 15. and should no ways discourage the hearts of the godly: therefore it is added, *And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

X. Notwithstanding of the Lord's secret purpose and decree, whereby, in his

deep wisdom and just judgment, Christ is a stone of stumbling unto many, yet this is no warrant to any to stand back from the offers of the gospel; but we should heartily close with the offers of the gospel, seeing they are laid forth indefinitely without exception of persons, and all are encouraged to come who will come: for it is added to that sad word, *Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling,--and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

XI. Let the wicked unbelievers in a world have what honours and estimation they please; yet the portion of all such before the Lord is shame and confusion of face: *Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*; and, upon the contrary, whosoever believeth not, shall be ashamed.

XII. Whatever disgrace and opprobry the children of God may be loaded with in a world, and how vilely soever accounted of; yet having now fled in to Christ for refuge, he is a sure shelter unto them, and shall free them from all shame before the Lord, and they shall be much honoured and esteemed of the Lord, as his anointed ones: *Whosoever believeth on him* (be they otherways in a world as they will,) *shall not be ashamed*; where more may be understood than is expressed.

XIII. Believers are by Christ, on whom they roll all their burdens and grievances, eased of much perplexity of mind and anxiety of spirit, about their own souls condition, the end of such and such dispensations, the accomplishment of such and such promises, and the like; and it is faith in Christ which settles believers, and composeth their spirits in the worst of times, and keepeth them from sinking when God hideth his face, and from putting out their hands to sin, in a time of trial, to work their own outgate; for, as it is in the Hebrew, *He that believeth shall not make haste.*

CHAPTER X.

IN this chapter the apoſtle, after he has prevented miſtakes, verſes 1. 2. ſpeaketh more fully of the rejection of the Jews, and inbringing of the Gentiles, ſhewing the grounds of God's caſting the Jews off, to verſe 11.; and next giveth ſome grounds proving the inbringing of the Gentiles, and thereby both clearing God's diſpenſation in this, and vindicating his own practice in preaching ſalvation to the Gentiles, to verſe 19.; then he cleareth the ſame from ſuch grounds as the Jews themſelves could not be ignorant of, verſes 19. 20. And laſtly, he ends with a word touching the caſting off of the Jews, and gives the main ground and reaſon of it out of Iſaiah.

VERSES 1. 2. *Brethren, my hearts deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael is, that they might be ſaved.*

For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

THE apoſtle being to ſpeak ſome more of the cauſe of the rejection of the Jews, a theme which he knew they had no delight to hear handled, and fearing leſt they ſhould take exceptions, and reject what he was holding forth, as flowing from ſome malice and envy he had conceived againſt them, therefore he prefaceſh ſomething to obviate this miſtake: and alſo, leſt the Gentiles, to whom he was writing mainly, ſhould caſt at this fundamental truth of juſtification by faith, and look upon him as an apoſtate from the law, upon ſome diſcontent, and that his inveighing againſt their law flowed from diſcontent, and ſo was much to be ſuſpected, he thinks it fit to ſhew what room Iſrael had in his affection. And, withal, leſt the Romans ſhould think he that ſpeaks ſo of his own nation as he doth, cannot have any great love to us, he gives them a warm and kindly compellation, in the firſt place, and ſays, *Brethren*. Then, as if he would ſay, Do

you think that all this which I ſpeak of my kinsmen according to the fleſh, floweth from any ill-will I have to them? No, indeed, there is no ſuch matter, I love them with my heart; for *my heart's deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael is, that they might be ſaved*: Glad would I be to have them ſaved, and for this cauſe I often pour out my ſoul to God for them, that he would have mercy upon them, and let them ſee the right way, and ſave them; and this I do not feignedly, but it is the thing I wiſh from my heart.

Next he gives the ground of this, verſe 2. ſaying I know for a certainty, and can witneſs the truth thereof, *I bear them witneſs, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge*; that is, they ſeem to be much affected and moved with the wrongs which God gets; they have a great grief for the wrongs which their law ſuffers by this doctrine of faith, but their zeal is prepoſterous, and not well grounded; it is *not according to knowledge*: they know not that the doctrine which we teach doth no way rub on God, nor wrong his glory, they miſtake in this, being ignorant of the right way whereby God is glorified; and becauſe they ſeem ſo holy and zealous, and ſo ſeem to have a good in-

inten-

rention, and yet they are but blinded, and follow a wrong guide and principle, I cannot but pity them, and wish them well, and pray for them from my heart.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is an old stratagem of the devil to raise jealousies and suspicions in the hearts of people at their pastors, and make them suspect their affection, and conclude their free language and inveighing against their courses, to flow from malice and ill-will, and thus raise a thick mist, which may hinder them from receiving the light of truth: Thus Paul was put to remove this stumbling-block out of their way, and say, *Brethren, my heart's desire to God, &c.*

II. True christian affection in pastors towards their flock, may well consist with their freedom in reproof and exhortation with them for their iniquities, and faithfully discovering unto them their folly, and the sinfulness of their courses: for notwithstanding of Paul's freedom in shewing his mind toward the Jews, yet he had a great affection towards them; *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, &c.*

III. Tho' we be sure that many be called and few chosen, and so all within the visible church shall not certainly be saved, yet the Lord's secret purpose and intention of election or reprobation, being hid from us, as to particular persons, and no ground of our duty, we are allowed to pray for all men, 1 Tim. ii. 2. except such as have sinned unto death, 1 John v. 6. after Paul's example, who prays for Israel, though he said before this, God had rejected them, not knowing who they were in particular that should be everlastingly rejected, and being assured of the salvation of some, Rom. xi. 25.: *My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved.*

IV. Where-ever special and christian love is, it will vent and kyth itself in serious and earnest prayer and wrestling with God, for the salvation of such as we carry

christian love towards; thus doth Paul's love evidence itself, in his *heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel, that they may be saved.*

V. Whatever ground people have whereupon they gather, that their minister's affection is not towards them, yet the bottom of all their groundless mistakes should be driven out, when they see and are persuaded, that the main thing the minister is driving at is the salvation of their souls; and when they find that he is wrestling with God for the same, and so would have them saved as well as himself, they need question the reality of his affection no more; for the apostle gives this as such an evidence of his affection as should fully satisfy them of the same, that *his heart's desire to God for Israel was, that they might be saved.*

VI. All Christians, having one Father, and being all bound to promote the glory of God, and the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ, are in some measure made their brethrens keepers, being bound to promote their spiritual welfare by admonitions and rebukes, Lev. xix. 17. by all their carriage and deportment, which should look christian-like, and free of scandal, Rom. xiv. 15. and by hearty wrestling with God by prayer for their salvation; and especially this duty lieth upon ministers whom the Lord has made overseers unto the people; both the one and the other should have their hearts desire and prayer to God for their salvation: *My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, says he, that they may be saved.*

VII. Prayer to God should not be a bare form and complimenting with God, but it should flow from, and express the hearty and sincere desires of the soul; prayers that want this are a dead carcass of words without life: we should pray in desire, Mark xi. 24. and from a hearty desire: *My heart's desire and prayer to God, &c.*

From

From verſe 2. OBSERVE,

I. Man being now plunged in ſin by nature, he is wholly corrupted, and his affections are vitiated, no leſs than the reſt of the faculties of the ſoul; and as their deſire, love, fear, hatred, and the reſt of their affections, are running in a wrong channel, ſo is their *zeal*; theſe Jews had *a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

II. Many may have ſuch a love to the ways of God, as to be forward for promoting of the ſame, and filled with indignation and hatred againſt any courſe that ſeemeth to croſs the ſame, and ſo ſeem very zealous, and yet their zeal may be but counterfeit coin: they had *a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.* See John xvi. 2. 3.

III. Heavenly and ſpiritual zeal walketh upon ſure grounds, and runeth not raſhly but adviſedly upon matters; it is not blind but intelligent, and has ſtill knowledge going before, directing both the right end, and the beſt and ſafeſt means; for right *zeal is according to knowledge.*

IV. When zeal is without knowledge, it is moſt ready to miſcarry folk, making them to maintain error and hereſy, inſtead of truth, as Gal. i. 14. and iv. 18. and to ſtand out againſt the truth which would ſave their ſouls; for the Jews zeal of the law made them reject the way of ſalvation through faith: *I bear them record, they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

V. Tho' ſuch as have a prepoſterous and blind zeal ſhould not be countenanced or approved in their ſinful courſes, which their blind zeal moveth them to follow, notwithſtanding of all their good intentions; yet ought they to be more tenderly and affectionately dealt with, and their ſoul's condition more ſeriously laid to heart, and their weakneſs pitied; for this cauſe doth Paul ſay, that he was earneſtly and heartily holding up their caſe to God, verſe 1.; becauſe he *bare them witneſs they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

VERSE 3. *For they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God.*

IN this verſe the apoſtle ſheweth the reaſon why, notwithſtanding of all their zeal and fervency of ſpirit in defending the law of God, and in keeping the ſame, they did miſcarry and run wrong, and ſo ſheweth how they were prepoſterouſly zealous; and, withal, ſo expreſſeth the ſame, as thereby he cleareth the grounds of their rejection, and ſo explaineth further what he had ſaid in ſhort, chapter ix. 31. 32. ſo he ſays, *They did not ſubmit themſelves unto the righteouſneſs, &c.* This is the ground of their miſcarrying, and the reaſon of their rejection, they would not ſubject themſelves unto that way of life which God appointed; they rebelliouſly ſtood out againſt Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and would not be cloathed with that righteouſneſs whereby only they could become juſtified before God, being *the righteouſneſs of God*; the righteouſneſs of one who was God, and a righteouſneſs deviſed only by God, and beſtowed by him, or imputed by faith: And of this he giveth two grounds; 1. *Being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs*; they knew not, nor did underſtand, the way of juſtification through the righteouſneſs of another; they could not, nor would not, take up the way to life thro' the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, tho' the ſame was laid forth unto them in the preaching of the goſpel. And, 2. *Going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs*; that is, they laboured to defend the way to life thro' their own doings and inherent righteouſneſs; they waxed ſo proud and confident of themſelves, that they would make their own righteouſneſs ſtand, tho' it could not; they were moſt deſirous to have it eſtabliſhed.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. All by nature are ſtrangers unto, and ignorant of, the right way how juſtice is ſatisfied.

satisfied, and of that righteousness where-with only we must be clothed before the Lord; no way can this be made known but by the preaching of the gospel: even the Jews, who excelled many others in knowledge, were ignorant of this righteousness; *Being ignorant of God's righteousnesses.*

II. The righteousness by which we stand justified before God, and for which we are accepted of him, is not within ourselves; it is not a righteousness inherent in us, a righteousness procured by our own works of whatsoever nature; but the righteousness of our Lord and Cautioner Jesus Christ, who is God, and a righteousness which must be imputed to us of God; so it is called *the righteousness of God.*

III. There is such an opposition and contradiction betwixt the righteousness of the law, or any works in us, or done by us, as meritorious, and the righteousness of Christ which is made over to us by faith, that whoever expects good by the one, doth wholly quit the other; whoever *establisheth their own, doth not subject themselves to God's righteousnesses.*

IV. Tho' we have nothing to satisfy justice with for our breach of the covenant, yet such a deal of pride is in us all by nature, that we would gladly have heaven and life thro' our own righteousness; we would be beholden to none but ourselves for this: *They went about to establish their own righteousness; tho' that righteousness of theirs could not support them, yet they fought and laboured by all means to make it stand.*

V. All such as do not believe in Christ, proclaim themselves rebels against God, and wilfully refuse to subject themselves unto the Lord and his righteousness; *they did not subject themselves unto the righteousness of God.* Altho' many pretend much humility in standing out against the offers of Christ, and think they cannot lay hold on him because of their sinfulness, or the like, yet it is no less before God

than open rebellion, and it floweth from pride.

VI. Many may have a glorious outside, and seem most religious, and zealous of the law, and be much for a strict life, who yet may not only be ignorant of the only way of salvation, but may also be heart enemies thereto: even the Jews, who *followed after the law of righteousness*, chap. ix. 31. are yet ignorant of the righteousness of God, yea, and did not submit themselves thereunto: *They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

VII. Before a soul can rest on Christ, and be clothed with his righteousness, he must first be brought low in his own sense and apprehension; all his boasting must be laid, and he must quit and renounce any claim he has to his own ways and deservings; his pride must fall; for believers *must submit themselves unto the righteousness of God; they must stoop and creep low.*

VIII. That which keeps many from a closing with Christ, and a taking on of his righteousness, is their ignorance of the same, and the conceit they have of their own worth and ability, thinking themselves able enough to do their own business without Christ: for the Jews *did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God, because they were ignorant thereof, and went about to establish their own righteousnesses.*

VERSE 4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

BECAUSE they might have said, that they knew no righteousness but that of the law, and of this they were zealous; and so it was not their own righteousness, but that which God had appointed, that they were seeking to establish; therefore he clearerh what he said, verse 3. and sheweth, that they mistook the law, and so bewrayed their ignorance thereof. They
thought

thought that the end of God's prescribing and setting forth the law was, that they might perfectly fulfil the same, and so become righteous by performing what the law required; and this was their mistake, they never looked beyond this, and so they looked not to Christ, whom God would have had them looking at: He was *the end of the law*. The Lord in his everlasting purpose had appointed Jesus Christ, his only Son, to become cautioner for man, and to fulfil the law, which man could not do by reason of the fall, and also to bear the punishment which the law threatened; and the Lord's pressing of the moral law upon them was to this end, that being convinced of their inability to keep the law according to its rigour, they might see a necessity of taking some other course, even of flying in to Christ, who had perfectly fulfilled the same; so the Lord's giving of the ceremonial law was to point this Mediator forth, and in types and ceremonies to direct them to one who would abundantly do their business. Thus Christ was the end of the law, both moral and ceremonial; and seeing they rested on their outward performances of obedience to these laws, and looked no farther, they mistook God's main aim and end, which was to lead them unto Christ, as by a school-master, Gal. iii. 24. and so they submitted not unto the righteousness of God, viz. that righteousness wherewith he would only rest satisfied, even the righteousness which was to be had only in Christ, and therefore he is said to be the end of the law for righteousness; only in him was a righteousness to be found, wherewith the Lord would rest satisfied; and he was pointed forth for that end, that all might run in to him for righteousness, and whoever would believe on him should be accepted in him as righteous; so *he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*; having fully kepted the law, and undergone death, which was the penalty.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Men may be very active, serious and zealous, about external ordinances, and legal performances, and yet miss the life of the business, and the kernel, and be strangers to Christ for all that: the Jews, for all their zeal of the law, were yet ignorant of Christ, who was *the end of the law*.

II. How busy and zealous soever we be about ordinances and performances, so long as we seek not Christ in them; and use them not, nor set about them, with an eye to him, as our end which we aim at, we are but all the while seeking ourselves, and labouring in vain: these Jews were *establishing a righteousness of their own*; and how so? because they missed Christ, and sought him not, who was *the end of the law*.

III. Howbeit there be great accidental differences betwixt the old and the new covenant, or that under which the Jews were before Christ came in the flesh, and that under which we are since his coming; yet they are the same for substance and essence, both pointing out the same way to heaven, even Christ *the way, the truth, and the life*, John xiv. 6. having both the same conditions, viz. faith in Christ; for *Christ is the end of the law*. Even then Christ was the way to heaven, and thro' him righteousness was to be had by faith: *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all such as believe*. See Acts x. 43. 1 Cor. x. 3.

IV. Albeit now, in the days of the gospel, wherein old things are done away, and shadows are vanished, Christ be more clearly and manifestly held forth; yet under the law he was no less really preached and pointed forth in all their ceremonies, being the substance of their shadows: thus was he *the end of the law*; and so he is the same Mediator now that he was then, there being *no other name under heaven by which we can be saved*, Acts iv. 12. see John viii. 58.

V. The more poor souls be convinced of their short-coming and transgressing of the holy law of God, and have their sins born in upon their consciences, they are not the farther off from Christ, but rather in a fairer way to him, if they wilfully mis-carry not; for even in this respect *Christ is the end of the law*: for the moral law was so sharply and strictly pressed upon the Jews, to the end that, being convinced of their guilt, they might run with greater haste in to Christ, and lay hold on him.

VI. Whatever course a humbled, self-condemned sinner can take for relief, when sin stareth him in the face, and is born home upon his conscience, there is no peace to be had with God, till Christ be closed with, and laid hold on; no justification but in him; no absolution but thro' him; no righteousness but from him: *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness*. All the Jews their running to the ceremonial law, when found guilty of the breach of the moral, would never procure a righteousness to them, but Christ was the end of the ceremonial law for righteousness.

VII. There is no way for a poor soul to be exonerated of sin and guilt, but by flying in to Christ; faith is the only way how Christ's righteousness is made over to us, and has been the way in all ages: even the Jews, for all their care of obeying the ceremonial law, were necessitated to betake themselves to Jesus Christ by faith; so *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*.

VIII. How guilty soever a poor soul be in its own eyes; yet there is a possibility of a remedy; and whatever sinners they have been, if now they will fly in to Christ, and lay hold on him by faith, they shall certainly be clothed with the righteousness of Christ: *Christ is the end of the law---to every one that believeth*. Gentiles as well as Jews; those who had not the ceremonial law, as well as these who had it.

VERSE 5. *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doth those things, shall live by them.*

IN the last verse there was two main things asserted; first, that the law under which the Jews lived, pointed at Christ, and in him alone righteousness was to be had thro' faith; and next, that there is no exception of persons in this matter, but whosoever believeth, be he Jew or be he Gentile, he is clothed with this righteousness. The first of these he confirmeth, unto the 11th verse, proving, 1. that righteousness was not to be had by the works of the law, verse 5.; and, 2. that it was only to be had by faith in Christ, to ver. 11. And by this means he further confirmeth, that the Jews were ignorant, and carried with a blind zeal; for they sought after the righteousness of the law, which was impossible, and knew not the righteousness of faith, which was possible, and far more easy.

In this 5th verse he brings in Moses describing the righteousness which is of the law, and so cites Lev. xviii. 5. to this purpose: If no body can perfectly keep the law, and do these things which are commanded therein, then no body can get life by the righteousness of the law: But so it is that no man can perfectly, fully and finally keep all the law; Therefore, &c. The minor he takes for granted, and was clear enough as touching the Jews, who made so much use of the ceremonies and daily sacrifices, which they needed not to have done if they were not guilty of the breach of the moral law. The major he confirmeth by Moses's words, saying, *Moses describing the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doth these things shall live by them.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Altho' the covenant which God made with the Jews at Mount Sinai, by Moses

as mediator, was a covenant of grace, and so the doctrine of Moses, for the most part, was to point out this covenant; yet sometimes he laid before them the covenant of works, and so preached and published the law, strictly taken, in opposition to Christ, and abstracted from the promise of a cautioner: thus *Moses describeth the righteousness of the law*, where the law is taken strictly for the covenant of works: See Gal. iii. 18.

II. Tho' we are not now to expect everlasting happiness by the covenant of works; yet it is not unnecessary, but useful for us, to have the tenor thereof laid forth unto us; that, seeing our hazardous condition by such a covenant, we may haste the faster in to the covenant of grace: for tho' the people of Israel were not under a covenant of works, as the only way to life, yet is the nature thereof several times held forth unto them; So *Moses describeth the righteousness of the law*, &c.

III. In the covenant of works, or of life, there being no mediator, or cautioner, coming in between God and Adam, man was to give obedience in his own strength, which was connatural; he was to stand upon his own legs, and was not to go out of himself for a righteousness: it is thus described, *The man that doth these things*.

IV. As this covenant required personal obedience; so did it require perfect and perpetual obedience; he was not to break in the least jot at no time: *The man that doth these things*; the covenant said, *Do this and live*.

V. That which the Lord promised in the covenant of works, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience, was not an animal life in paradise, or the continuance of his estate in paradise; but every thing which conduceth to make a man truly happy, is comprehended under life, and so it takes in the happiness both of soul and body: *The man that doth these things shall live thereby*.

VI. It being now altogether impossible

for any man breathing, to fulfil the conditions of the covenant of works, we must of necessity take another way of attaining to happiness, than our own righteousness and doings: for this cause doth he bring in this description of the righteousness of the law, saying, *The man that doth these things shall live by them*.

VERSES 6. 7. 8. *But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above)*

Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach.

HAVING in the preceding verse shewn, out of Moses, that it was impossible to get righteousness by the covenant of works, or the law strictly taken, as a covenant of life; he cometh now to shew, how far easier it is to get righteousness by faith: and in speaking to this, he makes use of a passage of Moses, Deut. xxx. 11. 12. 13. 14. which he commenteth and paraphraeth upon, and so explicateth it; and thereby taxeth the Jews further of their ignorance of this righteousness of God, which even Moses, with whose doctrine they pretended to be very well acquainted, spoke of; and of their folly in seeking to establish their own righteousness, which was a thing impossible, and neglecting the righteousness of God, which was more easy.

The apostle doth not cite this passage word by word, but citeth it so as paraphrasing upon it, and explaineth Moses's meaning. Moses, tho' he spoke much of the law, yet he was a minister of the covenant of grace; and in several places, particularly in that Deut. xxx. cited, holdeth forth the same: for we are there to understand, by the command which he com-
manded

manded them, not the law strictly taken, but his whole doctrine; and his whole doctrine being to point forth the only way of holiness and happiness, comprehendeth both faith and repentance: the law strictly taken, cannot be there understood; for it will never be observed whether it be far off or near hand, known or unknown, all is a matter, this covenant will never be kept. It is never in our heart, nor will be till faith be had, and then it will be in the heart but imperfectly. So then, Moses, in that chapter, being commending the goodness of God towards them, in that he was at so much pains to make the way to life plain and easy to them, is pointing forth the gospel, tho' darkly, according to the dispensations of these times, wherein the gospel was veiled under types, ceremonies, and legal expressions; (for it has reference unto the whole doctrine of Moses, wherein the will of God was revealed concerning the means of salvation, viz. faith in the Messiah, and new obedience) For, 1. The law, as we said, is not plain and easy, that they might hear it and do it, nor is it in their mouths, nor in their hearts. 2. He makes mention there of several other gospel truths and promises; as that, verse 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, &c.* compared with Jer. xxxi. 33. and xxxii. 40 as also, that concerning their restoring unto their own land, which is to be fulfilled in the latter times, for it has not yet been fully made good.

His scope then in these words, is to shew, out of Moses, how it is most easy to attain to righteousness by faith; and he gives some grounds for this.

So then, paraphrasing upon Moses, he brings in the righteousness of faith speaking by a figure, and so points to Moses's words: for he saith, *The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise*; that is, the scripture treating of this righteousness, which is to be had only by faith

in Christ, (for he is not speaking of faith as our righteousness, but of the righteousness of Christ, opposed to that of the law, apprehended by faith) speaketh on this wise; and it is as clear and sure, as if you would imagine the righteousness of faith to be speaking this itself. Now, what saith it? It saith, *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?* Or, *Who shall descend into the deep*; that is, thou needst not now be so anxious about the way of salvation, thou needst not now cry, *Who will go up to heaven, to learn us the way?* Or, *Who will go to hell, or the deep, to guide us by it?* Who will find out a way for us to get righteousness, either in heaven or earth? Folks need not now be at so much pains: And why to? Because, to say, *Who shall ascend into heaven*, were, to bring Christ down from above: and to say, *Who shall descend into the deep*, were, to bring up Christ again from the dead; that is, folk need not now be so anxious about the way to win to heaven, and to escape hell; for the business is done to their hand, Christ Jesus is both dead and risen again; and therefore, it any should now cry out, *Who shall ascend into heaven?* that is as much as to say, that Christ is not yet come down thence, and so, that he has not as yet suffered for our sins: and if they should cry out, *Who shall descend into the deep?* it is as much as to say, that Christ is not yet risen from the dead: so that Christ's death and resurrection being sure and certain, faith has a sure ground to fasten on, and needs not go either one where or other to seek righteousness, seeing in Christ's death and resurrection it is only to be had; and faith has no more to do, but to look out to Christ for all, and in him there is a solution of all doubts and scruples, for a conscience puzzled with the matter. What saith it then? It saith then, verse 8. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach*; that is, the true way to life is nigh at hand, revealed by God in his

his word; so that there is no more now to do, but to receive this word in thy heart, and to profess it in thy life: and lest any should think, that that word was the word of the law. because of this Moses speaketh; therefore he explaineth Moses's meaning, and sheweth, what that word was, *viz. the word of faith which we preach*; that is, the free promise which faith lays hold on, the gospel which begeth faith, and is gripped by faith, and requireth faith as the condition, which we hold forth and preach to people. The sum whereof is, That Christ is dead, and risen again, and so has acquired a complete righteousness, which we hold forth unto all who will receive the same, and submit to it by faith.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As the right taking up of the nature of the covenant of works, under which we are by nature, and by which alone we are naturally desirous to seek after life, should fear us from looking to that covenant, or from expecting any good thereby; so should it also serve to commend the covenant of grace, and the way of salvation thereby, and make our hearts fall in love therewith: therefore are these two covenants put together here, and compared together, that the Jews might fall out of conceit with the one, and in love with the other; *But the righteousness which is of faith, &c.*

II. Carnal zeal may so blemish and blindfold people, that through prejudice, they may mistake and be ignorant of most necessary truths, even though they be held forth unto them, and, as it were, among their very hands: for the Jews were ignorant of this righteousness of faith, altho' Moses, with whose doctrine they pretended great acquaintance, had spoken of it: Therefore doth the apostle make use of that place of Deuteronomy, *The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, &c.*

III. Tho' the way of salvation thro' faith in Christ, be a mystery, now at length since

Christ is come, clearly unfolded and revealed; so that in respect of the clear manifestation thereof unto us now, it may be said to have been hid before, as we see, Eph. iii. 5. Col. i. 26.; yet it is the same old way witnessed by all the prophets, Acts x. 43. and by which all who are arrived, have gone; it was even held forth by Moses, tho' darkly, as to a people under tutory, Gal. iv. 1. 2. 3.: *The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, &c.* John v. 46. *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me*; tho' the law was his main theme, John i. 17.

IV. It cannot but be a great aggravation of our ignorance now in the days of the gospel, in which the light shineth so clearly, that even in the noon-tide of the day, wherein the sun shineth brightest, we should notwithstanding, be utter strangers unto this way of salvation through Jesus Christ and his righteousness; seeing the small dim light which the Jews had from the law and doctrine of Moses, is made use of to aggravate their ignorance of this way of righteousness thro' faith: *It speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, &c.*

V. When folks mistake God's way, and thro' prejudice cast at it; they ordinarily fall upon a way more costly, and every way more disadvantageous and unprofitable, so as they spend their money for that which profiteth not: the Jews mistook God's way to heaven, and fell about the way of works, by which they were at much pains and labour, and yet it was impossible for them to get life: *But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise.*

VI. Though, if we consider man in his natural state, it be as impossible for man to perform the conditions of the new covenant, as it is to fulfil the law, or perform the conditions of the old covenant; yet if we consider the frame and draught of the two covenants, the second covenant being altogether of free grace, wherein nothing is required but what is promised.

is altogether a safer and easier covenant, than that covenant of works, which tho' made out of free grace, yet was drawn up according to strict justice, promising, nor allowing no furniture, but what was con-natural unto Adam: therefore says he, *But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise.*

VII. Tho' the way to life, thro' the righteousness of the law, be that which naturally people, being proud and unwilling to bow to God and his righteousness, love best, and set about with greatest seriousness; yet it is a way which will never satisfy a scrupulous awakened conscience, nor loose their doubts, but still leave them in hesitation and perplexity, and put them still to cry out, What shall we do to be saved? Who shall go up to heaven for us? And who shall descend into the deep for us? It is only the righteousness of faith which puts us from saying, Who shall ascend into heaven? *The righteousness which is of faith, and not the righteousness which is of the law, speaketh thus, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend, &c.*

VIII. All the righteousness which man could attain by the covenant of works, was a righteousness performed and acquired by himself in obeying the law, and is therefore called, *the righteousness of the law*; but the righteousness which we attain to by the covenant of grace, is a righteousness acquired by another, and which we obtain by flying out of ourselves, and laying hold on our Mediator by faith; and is therefore called, *The righteousness of faith*, because faith in the Messiah is required to the attaining of it.

IX. The only way for a poor soul to be rid of all its doubts and scruples, anent the way of attaining the crown, and escaping the damnation of hell, is to betake itself unto the new and better covenant, and run out of itself, unto Jesus Christ offered in the covenant, and accept of righteousness in him upon the terms offered; no peace or tranquility to a soul but in this

way: *The righteousness which is of faith, will not suffer us to say, Who shall ascend into heaven, &c.* This clearerth all doubts, and is sufficient to drive the bottom out of them.

X. The only ground upon which all perplexing thoughts which may trouble a poor soul in reference to its salvation may be removed, is Christ's humiliation and exaltation, his laying down his life a sacrifice to satisfy justice, and his rising up as a conqueror, overcoming him that had the power of death, and triumphing over death itself; we need not now be bascd, who shall go up to heaven to seek out a way for us, for Christ is come from that place already; nor need we anxiously ask, Who shall descend into the deep? for Christ has been there already, and is come up again. *The righteousness which is of faith will not suffer us to say, Who shall ascend up into heaven? for that were to bring Christ thence; nor who shall descend into the deep? for that were to bring up Christ again.* And the only thing which fostereth perplexing doubts is, the losing sight of, and ignorance of the sweet fruits that flow from Christ's dying and rising again.

From verse 8. OBSERVE,

I. Ministers may and ought to use such a way of exhorting and dealing with people, as may be most rousing and upstiring; people being ordinarily careless and indifferent hearers even of truths of great concernment: therefore doth the apostle propose this business dialogue-ways, *But what faith it? The word is nigh thee, &c.*

II. It is the commendation of the way of faith, and of the new covenant of grace, that it brings salvation home to folks doors, that they may embrace it with both heart and mouth: *The word is nigh thee, even in thy heart, and mouth.*

III. As the gospel makes the way of salvation easy, and brings pardon and life to our very doors; so it makes salvation sure and unquestionable in itself; and believers

ſievers may win to ſuch a perſuaſion of it, as may overcome many jealousies and doubts: therefore the word of promiſe, or the word of ſalvation, is ſaid to be near them, even in their hearts and mouths.

IV. Whatever allegations and teſtimonies of ſcripture we be making uſe of for the confirmation of truths, we ſhould explain the ſame, leſt we ſhould be found to clear what is obſcure by that which is as obſcure, and ſo ſtill leave our hearers in the dark; as Paul explaineth that word which Moſes uſed, and calls it the word of the goſpel, or of faith; *I ſay, the word of faith which we preach.*

V. The goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is nothing elſe but a map of free and gracious promiſes, which the true God, who cannot lie, hath made; and they are ſo linked together, as that they ſeem but one main promiſe, which faith is to lay hold upon: hence the goſpel is called, *The word of faith.*

VI. True and ſaving faith is not a roving, groundleſs fancy, or a dream of man's brain; but it is a ſure-bottomed act of the ſoul, and has the word and ſure promiſe of the unchangeable Jehovah to reſt upon, and it can find no other ground to ſettle on: faith has ay the word for its ground, on which it ſtandeth; *The word of faith.*

VII. Not only has the Lord, in the depth of his wiſdom and rich goodneſs, contrived the goſpel, and the way of ſalvation thro' his only Son Jeſus Chriſt; but alſo hath laid down a way how this his good-will and kindneſs ſhould be made known unto the children of men; and hath therefore authorized men to come forth and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and to hold forth his mind; and becauſe he knew that we would be unwilling to accept of this kindneſs, therefore hath he cloathed his ambaffadors with authority to command all to accept of the kindneſs of this great King rendered to the n. *The word of faith which we preach.*

VIII. Miniſters, in all their ſermons and

carriage in their calling, ſhould be careful to promote the main buſineſs, viz. poor people's accepting of the tender of free grace made to them in the goſpel; this ſhould be their main work, and all other things ſhould be done in ſubſerviency to this end: this ſhould be the text and upſhot of all preachings; their preaching ſhould be about the word of faith; *The word of faith which we preach.*

IX. Miniſters ſhould ſtick cloſe by their commiſſion, and ſhould not conceal any thing of it for neither feud nor favour; but ſhould boldly, faithfully, and plainly, with majeſty, conſtancy, and freedom of ſpirit, declare the whole counſel of God, and that to all perſons without exception; for they are heralds, and ſhould behave themſelves as heralds: ſo the word here, ſignifying to preach, ſignifieth, to preach and publiſh as a herald and public meſſenger, proclaiming the mind of king and ſtates: *The word of faith which we preach.* See Matth. iii. 3. and x. 27. Luke xii. 3. 2 Tim. iv. 2.

VERSES 9. 10. *That if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.

THE ſum of the goſpel, which was called in the laſt verſe, *the word of faith*, is here ſet down, and ſo that word of faith is explained: ſo that the ſubſtance of the goſpel is this, If we will accept of Jeſus Chriſt as our Lord and Saviour, firmly believing that he hath finiſhed the work of our redemption, and hath died, and is riſen up again, (a truth which infidels and Heathens will not grant, nor Jews either;) and that not hiſtorically, as devils and many graceleſs men may do, but heartily, ſeriously and ſincerely; and if we avouch

none need to stumble, tho' they read not their names in such and such promises, but find them only conceived in general terms.

XII. Before a soul can be saved, guilt must be taken off his conscience, justice must be satisfied, and a righteousness had: *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, and this before salvation be had.

XIII. Faith closing with Christ, as ours in particular, and heartily accepting of him for our help and salvation, is the only way whereby we win to the enjoyment of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and is the only condition of putting us into a justified state: *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness*.

XIV. Tho' this faith, with a purpose of new obedience, be the condition of instating us into the state of the justified: yet, beside faith whereby we are justified, we must have a sincere, unfeigned profession, and avowing of our faith by a constant christian walk in holiness, ere we can reach the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls: *And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*; God has eternally knit these two together, as the mean and the end, and so, tho' faith be the condition of justification, yet faith and new obedience both, are the condition of the actual possession of life.

XV. God's decree, purpose, and promise, do not loose our hands from obedience; for tho' life eternal be promised to believers, and such as are justified shall certainly be glorified; yet they must walk in the way thither: For, as *they must believe unto righteousness, so must they make confession unto salvation*.

VERSES 11. 12. 13. *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed.*

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

IN these verses the apostle confirmeth, out of scripture, that which he set down in the preceding verse, and proveth the necessity, both of faith unto righteousness, verse 11. and of confession unto salvation, verse 13. and, withal, he confirmeth the other particular which he had affirmed, verse 4. viz. that there was no exception of persons in this new covenant, now under the gospel, but that *Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, verse 12. which also is confirmed by both the passages cited, verses 11. and 13.

In the 11th verse he cites that same passage which he cited in the last verse of the preceding chapter, out of Isa. xxviii. 16. following the Seventy; and whereas it is set down indefinitely in the Hebrew, thus, *He that believeth*, he rendereth it universally, *whosoever believeth*. Now that he had ground for taking it universally, he sheweth, verse 12. and so he confirmeth what he said before, verse 4. that there is no reason to exclude the Gentiles; For, 1. *There is no difference betwixt the Jew and the Greek*; all are alike welcome to Christ, thro' faith. The Greeks are taken for all the rest of the world beside the Jews, as Rom. i. 16. Gal. iii. 28. 2. He says, (and thereby confirmeth what was said last,) *For the same Lord is over all*; he is the Lord Creator and Governor of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, Rom. iii. 29. *for of him are all things*, Rom. xi. 36. 3. *He is rich unto all that call upon him*; he is rich in mercy, and free in setting it out to all that call upon him, be what they will; he is bountiful and beneficial to all without any diminishing of his fulness, or loss to such as partake thereof.

In the 13th verse he both confirmeth what he said last, and also that which was said, verses 9. 10. by a passage cited out of Joel ii. 32. where the prophet is prophesying of the Messiah, and of the good which would be had in him, as Peter makes us to understand, Acts ii. 21. and among

among other things he says, *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered:* and Paul, following the Seventy, says, shall be *saved*, all being one; the one being a necessary consequent of the other: whence it is clear, that confession is necessary to life; because calling upon God, which is nothing but our professing of the Lord to be ours, and of our dependance on him for life and salvation, and making use of him in all our straits and difficulties, is knit here with salvation. And also it is clear, that there is no exception of persons, because it is universal; *Whosoever*, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As no man's faith should depend upon another's, be what he will, no man being master of another's soul and conscience; so the word of God should be the only ground of our faith, and that only should settle our belief of truths: therefore doth the apostle say, *As the scripture saith.* See Acts xvii. 11.

II. It is very necessary to have the grounds and fundamentals of religion well cleared out of scripture, that we may stand on a sure ground in the day of temptation; therefore doth the apostle clear, out of scripture, the two main grounds of Christianity, which he mentioned before.

III. Whatever gracious promises were made of old unto the people of the Jews, believers now under the gospel, tho' Gentiles, may claim a right to them; the Lord alloweth us to thrust ourselves in under the wings of these indefinite promises, and make them universal, for our own encouragement; for what was promised by Isaiah to the people of Israel in indefinite terms, is here by Paul turned over for the comfort of the Gentiles in universal terms, saying, *Whosoever believeth in him.*

IV. True and saving faith hath always Christ for its object to which it looks, and upon whom it resteth: and as there was faith under the law, so this faith looked

still out towards Christ, without whom it could not be: therefore what in Isaiah is *believeth*, is here *believeth in him*, that is, *in Christ.*

V. An unjustified state is always attended with shame and confusion of face; so as one who is not justified thro' faith has never his nakedness covered with the mantle of Christ's righteousness, and so can never with confidence look God in the face; it is only he *who believeth on him*, who *shall not be ashamed.*

VI. Howbeit believers who are justified thro' faith, do often blush and are ashamed when they consider their own abominations, and their daily miscarriages; yet they are freed from that cursed shame and confusion of face that attends the wicked enemies of Christ; they may come boldly forward to the throne of grace: *Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed.* See Joel ii. 27.

From verse 12. OBSERVE,

I. Tho' under the law the church was reciprocal with the commonwealth of Israel, it was only that nation unto which the means of salvation were unfolded, none else, except some few proselytes, were admitted to these privileges; yet now under the gospel the partition wall is broken down, and all nations, without exception, have access to God thro' Christ; and other nations beside the Jews are taken within the verge of the church; *no difference now betwixt the Jew and the Greek.*

II. As the Lord is the Creator of the ends of the earth, and so all flesh are obliged to him for their being; so hath he power and sovereignty over all nations, kindreds, and qualities, to dispose of them in his providence as seemeth good in his eyes; he is obliged to none, but disposeth of them as pleaseth him best; the rich and poor have both the same God and Master: *The same God is over all.*

III. The consideration of God's exercising his power and sovereignty in his creation

creation and providence, over all men, and that impartially, without respect of persons or nations, should encourage even such as think themselves farthest off from God, and least minded and regarded by him, to draw near to him in a Mediator; for this is given as a ground why there is no respect of persons with God in the matters of salvation, because there is no respect of persons with him in the matter of creation, and of his sovereignty over folk: *The same Lord is over all.*

IV. There is riches of *goodness* in God, Rom. ii. 4. to shew towards poor miserable sinners; and of *mercy*, Eph. ii. 4. in passing by their transgressions for his own name's sake; and of *grace*, Eph. i. 7. in working a thorough change in them, and drawing them in to himself by faith; and of *wisdom*, Rom. ix. 33. to carry them on towards everlasting happiness, notwithstanding of the many difficulties in their way; for he is here said to be rich, *The same Lord over all is rich, &c.*

V. However the Lord be letting out and communicating much of his goodness even towards Heathens, and enemies, Rom. ii. 4. and giving many common mercies and acts of bounty and goodness towards unbelievers; yet there are none who are enriched with the riches of his special love, grace and good-will, or can challenge the out-letings of his grace, in pardoning their daily escapes, and of his wisdom and strength, in carrying them safe to heaven, but such as are calling upon him, depending upon him for fresh supply and dropings of grace: *He is rich to all them that call upon him.*

VI. Howbeit there be many who are truly seeking God, that look upon themselves as forsaken of God, and unworthy of any favour or respect at his hand; yet all such as call upon him in truth, how feckless soever they seem to be in their own eyes, may go boldly unto God as their treasure and store-house, and God is engaged to let out of himself unto them ac-

cording to their necessities: *He is rich to all them that call upon him.*

VII. However many think that God is a hard master to serve, yet there are none that are seeking his face in sincerity, who shall have just cause to say so of him; he is bountiful and liberal to them all, and lets out of himself in great abundance, so as no soul needs fear want, how many soever there be to partake of his goodness; he is an inexhaustible fountain, at which all may drink, and drink abundantly: *He is rich unto all that call upon him; none of them can justly complain, for he is bountiful and liberal unto them all.*

VIII. True and sincere professing of the Lord to be ours, consisteth in constant dependence upon him for relief in all our straits, counsel and direction in all our difficulties, as our head and husband; keeping constant correspondence with him by prayer and supplication; for what before he called a confessing with the mouth, he now calleth a calling upon the Lord: *He is rich to all them that call upon him.*

From verse 13. OBSERVE,

I. However we be strangers to God by nature, and have the door closed upon us; yet having now closed with Christ by faith, there is an open door made, and access unto all to lay out their necessities and wants unto God as a father; and wherever there is true faith, it vents in sending up its suits and desires to the Most High: for *believing on him* goeth before *calling upon him*; and after they have believed, then followeth, *whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*

II. Whatever straits and difficulties believers can meet with in a world, they have still this back door to fly to, and when all shifts and refuges fail, they have this course to betake them unto, even to call upon the Lord; and whatever guilt stare them in the face, they are allowed to step forward in humility, and yield themselves

unto the Lord as Jehovah; there is an universality here, *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord.*

III. In all our addresses unto the Lord, we should still take him up as Jehovah, the same unchangeable God, notwithstanding of all the various dispensations which we meet with; and all-sufficient, able to give a being to all his promises, as he hath his being in and of himself; this would both strengthen our faith, and sharpen our confidence: therefore it is said, *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, or of Jehovah.*

IV. Howbeit believers may long lie still in trouble, notwithstanding of their crying to be delivered, and may be denied the particulars which they are most anxious about; yet in end God shall fully and finally deliver them, and make good this promise, *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*

V. Altho' believers be oftentimes entertaining hard thoughts of God, when he is not answering them at every call, and satisfying all their desires; yet when the day cometh that this promise shall be made good, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes, and place them without the reach of trouble and calamity, then shall they be convinced of the riches of God towards them; and every temporal delivery and answer to their suits and desires, is a proof of the riches of his goodness, mercy, and good-will toward them: for to prove that God is rich to all that call upon him, he brings forth this testimony, where the Lord promiseth, that *whosoever shall call upon his name shall be saved*

VI. Jesus Christ is true God, equal with the Father in power and glory; for here he is called JEHOVAH, a name which only belongeth to the true God, and is no where given to others; for what before was called a confessing of Christ, is here called a calling on the name of Jehovah.

VERSES 14. 15. *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

THE apostle in this discourse of his is interlining the Jews rejection with the calling of the Gentiles; wherefore having made mention of the promises of God, of life and salvation to such as would believe in, and call upon God, and shown how these promises reach the Gentiles no less than the Jews, he now taketh occasion to speak of the calling of the Gentiles, and to show how consonant it is unto the Lord's promises; and thereby justifieth his preaching to the Gentiles, which did not a little displease the Jews. And in this he layeth out the chain of the means whereby God brings his own to life, and linketh every mean closely to another, as the effect to the cause. His discourse is a gradation; for having made mention of that promise in Joel, that *whosoever should call upon the name of the Lord, be they Gentile or Jew, should be saved*; and now, would he say, Seeing it is God's good pleasure that the Gentiles should be saved, and he hath here said, that none shall be saved, but such as call upon his name, you cannot be offended with me for preaching the gospel unto them, for there is a necessary connection, in God's ordinary way, betwixt the preaching of the gospel and salvation. Thus then he reasoneth by queries, because the matter was clear, and should be undeniable. 1. *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?* before one can truly and sincerely call upon the Lord, he must believe in him; he must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him, Heb. ix. 6. 2. *And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* Faith is

is no blind act of the soul; the mysteries concerning life being hid from us naturally, they must be revealed ere we can believe: faith is an understanding act of the soul, and presupposeth knowledge. 3. *And how shall they hear without a preacher?* How can they be confirmed in these matters, unless there be some set apart of purpose for that office and employment, to preach the glad tidings of the gospel with authority. And, 4. *How shall they preach, except they be sent?* How shall they take upon them this office, to preach with authority, unless they have a commission, and unless they be authorized for that effect. And for the confirmation of this, he citeth a passage out of Isaiah lii. 7. in citing whereof, he followeth not the Seventy, which is corrupt, (for they render the words thus: *I am present as beauty upon the mountains, as feet preaching the bearing of peace, and preaching good things*;) but the Hebrew; citing what was for his purpose, and turning the singular into the plural, following the force of the Hebrew word, *As it written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.* And though the Hebrew verb rendered, *to preach the gospel*, signifieth only to publish tidings, yet the apostle doth thus render it, thereby declaring what it was which the prophet was mainly aiming at, *viz.* the publishing of the gospel. Also in these words the prophet was speaking of the return of the captivity from Babylon, Neh. i. 11. and therefore says, *How beautiful?* how comely or desirable are the very dusty and sweaty feet of such as preach the gospel of peace and reconciliation with God, and declare peace and welfare, and publish glad and good tidings. Now, by this passage thus cited, he cleareth the sum of what he has been saying, *viz.* that the gospel must be preached, and that it cannot be done without a commission from the Lord; yea, that the preaching of the glad tidings of the gospel is so necessary,

that the very feet of such as carry these good tidings should be lovely and desirable.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Humble depending on God, and seeking him and his help in all our straits and necessities, is necessary unto life, by virtue of a command, so as such who scorn to call on God, have no warrant to expect life, but do certainly exclude themselves therefrom; the whole contexture of the means of life is for this end: *How can they call on him*, &c. See Psal. cxix. 94. and xiv. 4.

II. Howbeit many may call upon the Lord with their lips, Luke xviii. 11. tho' they have not faith, yet none can truly and heartily lay out their condition before the Lord with confidence, but such as have placed their hope in the Lord, and have cast their burden over on him by faith, having grounds of hope to be heard: strangers may cry, but his own only can call upon him as their engaged God and Father: *How can they call upon him in whom they have not believed?* See Mark xi. 24. James i. 6. 7. Rom. xiv. 23. Heb. xi. 6.

III. Seeing neither angels nor saints departed are such as we are allowed to place our confidence in, being discharged therefrom, under the pain of a heavy curse, Jer. xvii. 5. therefore neither dare we invoke them, and send up our desires to them in a religious manner: it is impossible that *we can call upon them aright in whom we have not believed.*

IV. True and saving faith is not a blind, rash, and groundless act of the soul, but is a most rational deed, founded upon certain knowledge, and clear grounds; none truly believe in God, but whom they know, and have heard: *How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

V. By nature we are utter strangers unto the nature and excellent properties of God, the knowledge whereof would encourage a soul to believe in him; and so by nature we cannot believe, and cast our anchor

anchor on the Moſt High; for we cannot believe, except we know; and we cannot know, without revelation: What we know of God muſt be drunken in with the hearing of the ear; *How ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

VI. Tho' the Lord has his own way of working faith, and other graces neceſſary to ſalvation, in infants who are elected, and in ſuch as are born deaf; yet in the Lord's ordinary courſe and way of working of faith, it is begoten by the preaching of the goſpel; and ſuch as ſtop their ears at the word preached, are likely never to believe: *How ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

VII. Howbeit many may deſpiſe the preaching of the word, and account it fooliſhneſs, and may think to be edified as well in the faith, if not better, by their own private ſtudies, without public preaching; yet however God may be pleaſed to bleſs theſe private means to ſome, he has appointed public preaching to be the ordinary way of ſalvation, and of grounding folk in the knowledge of God, ſo as none who condemn the ſame can have any ground to expect God's bleſſing upon their private endeavours: *How ſhall they hear without a preacher?* ſo that *where there is no viſion, the people periſh*, Prov. xxix. 18. See 1 Cor. i. 18. 1 Tim. i. 16.

VIII. Tho' God may ſometimes bleſs the labours of parents in educating their children, Gen. xviii. 19. Eph. vi. 4. and of maſters in inſtructing their ſervants, and of ſchool-maſters their ſcholars, and of private Chriſtians in inſtructing their neighbours; yet God's ordinary way of begetting faith in ſouls is by the preaching of men in office, who are authorized, not by gifts alone, but alſo by an authoritative miſſion; and it is the duty of paſtors, and men in office, as ſuch, even to beget children to God, and by their preaching to work faith in their hearers: *How can they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach, except they be ſent?*

IX. Howbeit all private Chriſtians may and ought, according to their ſtations, to endeavour to promote the ſpiritual welfare of their neighbours, by occaſional warnings and rebukes, Lev. xix. 17. and other wholeſome admonitions and inſtructions; yet none may preſume to take upon them the office of a preacher, and to officiate therein publicly, and with all authority, in a conſtituted church, unleſs they be called thereto, either immediately and extraordinarily only, as were the prophets and apoſtles; or mediately, by his church, in the way carved out by him; ſo that it is not ſufficient that they be inſtructed with gifts, but they muſt have an orderly miſſion and call thereto, as being public meſſengers and embaſſadors, 2 Cor. v. 19. 20.: Miſſion is eſſential, and it is eſſential even to ordinary teachers, or all whoſe office it is to beget faith; and this miſſion is not only providential, which can warrant no act of itſelf, but authoritative, ſuch as agreeth to *watchmen and heralds*, Iſa. lii. 8. *rulers*, 1 Tim. v. 17. *overſeers*, Heb. xiii. 17. 24. *ſtewards*, 1 Cor. iv. 1.: *How can they preach, except they be ſent?* See Heb. v. 4. 5.

X. This office wherein ſome are ſet, with ſpiritual commiſſion and warrant, is not an office to fall down, but is a ſtanding ordinance to the end of the world, being of a great neceſſity for the begetting of faith in people, ſo that ſo long as there is faith to be wrought in people, this ordinance and office will be found neceſſary; hence we find promiſes of the continuance of it, Jer. iii. 15. and xxiii. 4. and of God's preſence with ſuch, Matth. xxviii. 20. God's end in inſtituting this, calls for it, Eph. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xii. 29.: *How can they hear without a preacher?*

XI. This ordinance of the miniſtry is not an ordinance of man, tho' God be pleaſed mediately to inſtate ſome particular perſons in the office, but it hath its riſe from heaven; God is its author, who therefore hath deſigned particular perſons

thereto, distinguishing them from others by distinct titles and characters, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Acts xiii. 2. and xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2. Tit. i. 7. Gal. vi. 10. Luke xii. 42. and xvi. 2. he it is who hath set down what qualifications is fit for such, 1 Tim. iii. 2. and ii. 2. 15. and the like; for he who made the rest of the links of the chain made this too; he who said, *How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* said also, *How can they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach, except they be sent?*

XII. Such as God hath commissioned and authorized for the work of the ministry, ought to go about the duties of their calling with gravity and authority, without fear; they should be like heralds, knowing who hath sent them forth, and impowered them; such as are once sent may boldly and freely preach, with all authority: *How can they preach, except they be sent?* that says, that if once they be sent, they may *preach*, that is, as heralds publish and proclaim the mind of the Lord: And because the thoughts of our calling are not fresh upon our spirits, therefore we faint so readily when we meet with opposition.

From the passage cited OBSERVE,

I. The principal task and errand of the authorized ministers of Christ, is to publish and proclaim peace to all rebels, who will lay down their weapons, and submit to take quarters from Christ Jesus the Prince of Peace, who has bought peace with his precious blood, and hath laid down his life to purchase peace and reconciliation betwixt God and sinners; they are public heralds sent forth to *publish peace*, and the terms of an everlasting agreement: See Acts x. 36. 37.

II. However carnal people, that are wedded to their lusts, and blinded with self-love, and love to their idols, so as they cannot clearly take up, nor understand the nature of divine things, do look on ministers

preaching as an intolerable burden whereof they weary; yet the very truth is, ministers are about nothing but what is good and profitable to them, and excellent in itself; all that which they speak according to their commission, how bitter and unfavoury soever it appear, yet is wholesome and useful to people: they treat about heaven and eternity, and labour to clear the way thither, and to engage folk in that way, to the salvation of their souls; so they are said to *publish good things*.

III. As these things about which ministers are to be employed are transcendently excellent, lovely and desirable, being the gladdest news that ever was heard of, and the best things that ever were imagined; so ministers in handling of these should behave themselves suitably, and should be affected with the sweetness and desirableness of the news themselves, and hold them forth so as others may be convinced of the truth and worth of them, and accordingly affected: their duty is, to handle these good things, and that peace, as glad news; and, to speak so, they should evangelize this matter of peace, and these good things: *They preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things*.

IV. Seeing men by nature are enemies to God, and there is no peace between God and them, and seeing they are also denuded of all these precious and excellent commodities of heaven; such as come in the name of the Lord with offers of such things to them, should be most heartily welcomed and embraced, with all love and favour; and the more any poor soul be sensible of their want of these spiritual and saving enjoyments, and of their need of peace and reconciliation with God, the more highly will they esteem them: *How beautiful are the feet of such as preach the gospel of peace!* They are beautiful and lovely, and none can tell how beautiful they are unto mankind sinners.

V. Whatever infirmities ministers are compassed with, (being subject to them no less

less than others) which may render them contemptible; yet it is the duty of all the Lord's people to be *esteeming them very highly in love for their work's sake*, 1 Thess. v. 13. and upon this account should their estimation be founded, that they are carriers of the glad tidings of the gospel; and where true and hearty love and estimation is, it will be extended to all in that office, and that upon this account: *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!*

VI. The more that ministers have been loosers through preaching of the gospel, having spent their strength and substance, and having incurred reproach and obloquy because of their faithful deportment in following their commission, the more should they be loved and esteemed, tho' upon that account they should be less accounted of in the world; even their feet, that are defiled with dust, and are made to suffer, are beautiful: *How beautiful are the feet of such!*

VERSES 16. 17. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then, faith cometh by hearing, and bearing by the word of God.*

BEfore that he draw a conclusion from his argument, verses 14. 15. he casts in a word, verse 16. partly to obviate an objection which might be moved from what he said, verse 14. viz. from these words, *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* The Jews might say, that then it will follow, that all such as hear the gospel should certainly believe, and so we who have heard the gospel should not be rejected for unbelief; therefore says he, *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.* Next, this word is partly cast in upon the back of that which was cited out of Isa. lii. 7. to this purpose; Tho' the preachers of the gospel be such as preach the gospel of peace,

and bring glad tidings of good things, so as their feet ought to be beautiful; yet, alas! these glad tidings are not believed by all these to whom they come; *They have not all believed the gospel.* And this he confirmeth out of Isaiah liii. 1. where he is complaining of the naughty welcome that the offers of Christ got in his time, and would get in after times, when Christ was come in the flesh; for thus he breaketh out, *Lord, who hath believed our report?* Paul addeth, *Lord, to shew to whom the prophet was making this regret.* Then, verse 17. he draws a conclusion from his former discourse, saying, *So then, faith cometh by hearing, and bearing by the word of God;* that is, the word of God, by being preached and heard, is the only mean whereby faith is begotten in the heart; and so faith hath its rise from God, who works it according to his own mighty power; and so before a soul can (in the Lord's ordinary way of dispensation) believe, the gospel must be preached to it; and so I cannot be blamed for preaching, being sent and commissioned unto the Gentiles, seeing without this they would never get faith, and so would never be saved, contrary to God's promise,

OBSERVATIONS.

I. People being naturally rude and ignorant, and so possessed with conceits of their own good condition, that they are ready to misconstrue and misapply truths, therefore ministers should be careful to remove every thing which may seem a scruple and doubt in peoples minds, and a ground to foster their misconceptions; therefore doth Paul break out at a broadside, as it were, to clear what he had said touching preaching, lest they should be rooted in their mistake: *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*

II. Though public and authoritative preaching by men in office, be the ordinary mean appointed of God for begetting of faith in people, and blessed of God for

the actual working of the same in some; yet is it not efficacious in all, but many may hear long and be nothing the better; the gospel may be to them a sealed book: *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.* There is more required for the begetting of faith than the preaching of the gospel; the almighty power of God must work faith in the heart, and hence it is called *the gift of God*, Eph. ii. 8.

III. The gospel of Jesus Christ containeth nothing but terms of peace, and the offers of reconciliation thro' him, and good things; it is the sweetest news that ever was heard tell of, how a condemned rebel may be reconciled to the great God of heaven, and how a poor empty dyvour may be enriched with all good things, and may be filled with *spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*, Eph. i. 3.: what was before called *peace* and *good things*, is here called *the gospel*, which is indeed glad tidings of good things.

IV. Howbeit the gospel contain nothing but glad and excellent tidings, even the sweetest news that ever a poor soul heard of; yet there are multitudes who never welcome these news, and give any kindly entertainment unto them, as becometh; but notwithstanding there be a great command, that cometh forth with the gospel, to all to embrace the same heartily, yet multitudes stand out against the call thereof; neither doth the sweetness of the tidings allure them, nor the weight of a command constrain them, but they stand out for all that: *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*

V. The main duty which is called for from the hearers of the gospel, is humble submission unto the terms of the covenant of grace, and a willing and chearful embracing and taking on of Christ, and a choosing of him as our head and husband, and kindly submitting unto, and acquiescing in the great plot of salvation through Jesus Christ; the gospel must be obeyed: *They have not all obeyed the gospel.*

VI. It is a great aggravation of folks unchearful submission unto, and not hearty acquiescing in the plot contrived by the infinitely wise God, and makes their refusing submission thereto, to be no less than rank rebellion before God, that there is nothing in this business but what is most worthy of all acceptation, so as the very news-bringers should be very highly esteemed of, and loved exceedingly; for this is added upon the back of what was said before, the more to aggravate the Jews and others guilt in refusing obedience: *How beautiful are the feet of such as preach glad tidings of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things*, and yet it followeth, *they have not all believed the gospel.*

VII. God's setting up of the ordinance of the ministry amongst men, and authorizing these in office to hold forth glad tidings, to preach the gospel of peace, and publish the terms of pacification, and to lay out the offer of desirable things, may warrant any soul to close with the offer, to accept of the bargain upon the terms offered, seeing God is in earnest, and hath sworn it: yea, not only are they allowed and warranted to close with Christ, and embrace the covenant, but they are bound under a certification to do it; there is a command above their heads, and under the pain of disobedience they must obey: *They have not all obeyed the gospel*, says, they might have done so; yea, that they should have done so, seeing there were messengers sent to preach these glad tidings of peace.

From the passage cited OBSERVE,

I. Christ Jesus should be the theme and text of all the preaching of ministers; the subject of all their discourse should be news of Christ; and Christ is a theme sufficient for ministers in all ages; they will find matter enough of discourse in him: he has been, and will be the principal subject of the discourse of all the ministers of the gospel; their duty is to make report of him, and

and all ministers should make report of him: *Who hath believed our report?* And their report should be such as they have heard and learned of God; for the Greek word signifies, *our hearing*, or, that which we have heard.

II. As it is the duty of all the hearers of the gospel to give credit unto the report that is made of King Jesus; so the faith which is required of them, is not a speculative knowledge of, and historical belief given unto, the truths preached: but it is a hearty embracing of the glad news, a yielding unto the offers, and condescending unto the terms proposed, and yielding obedience unto the command that cometh along in the gospel: so that true and saving faith is a hearty welcoming of the offers of life made in the gospel, and resting upon that great plot and contrivance of heaven; for what was before called, *obedience*, is here called, *believing*; *Who hath believed our report?*

III. Ministers should propose no other end before them, in preaching of the gospel, but to have a hearty consent yielded unto the bargain, and a hearty accepting of the offer made; and should so carry themselves in that function, as may tend most to the gaining of folks consents: Isaiah, and others, made, and should make their report, to the end that people might believe: *Who hath believed our report?*

IV. Tho' the sin of unbelief be a great and a grievous sin; yet it is a sin which reigneth in all ages; few in all ages and generations are to be found, who do heartily and cheerfully submit unto the terms of the new covenant. This sin was rife in Isaiah's days, and in the days of others after him; so as it may be the common note of all ministers, in all ages, *Who hath believed our report?*

V. Many may live under powerful ordinances, and that for no short time; and yet remain disobedient and unwrought on at the heart: even Isaiah complained; that

few believed his report; *Who hath believed our report?*

VI. Ministers should be particularly acquainted with the condition of the people over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers; and they should not think enough to preach the gospel, and never once look after it, to see what fruits follow upon their pains; but, their main design being to work the people up to an imbracement of the offers, they should try, whether their offers be welcomed or not; Isaiah saw that his auditors did generally cast at the gospel, and therefore he crieth out, *Who hath believed our report?*

VII. It should affect the heart of a minister of the gospel; and it will affect the hearts of any who are tender of, and desirous to see the welfare of poor souls, to see the glad tidings of the gospel slighted, and cast behind backs as a matter of no concernment: this will go near a tender minister's heart, and will grieve him much, yea, more than any thing that can occur: *Who hath believed our report?* was the sad and heavy regret of Isaiah.

VIII. It is best for a minister to vent his grief of heart unto God, for the great contempt of the gospel which appeareth among his people, and lay out his complaint to his Master; this will best ease him, and evidence his sincerity in going about his duty, and his dependence on the Lord as his Master, to whom he must give an account: therefore it is said, *Lord, who hath believed our report?*

IX. Ministers of the gospel, being all employed in the same service, under one Master, and driving at the same end, the salvation of souls, should have a fellow-feeling of the burdens of one another, and should take a lift of another's discouragement in the work of the ministry, and lay to their shoulder to help them, lest they faint under the load: therefore Isaiah takes a lift of the condition of others, as well as of himself, saying, *Who hath believed our report?*

From Verse 17. OBSERVE,

I. Faith which is necessary unto salvation, hath its rise from God, he is the principal and only worker thereof: *Faith cometh by hearing of the word of God.*

II. Tho' it be only the hand of omnipotence that can work faith in a soul, and nothing can change the heart but the power of God, and to this we ought to cast our eye; yet it hath seemed good in the Lord's eyes to work this by ordinary means, and particularly, by the preaching of the gospel of Christ: he hath appointed this ordinance of preaching for this end and effect, *Faith cometh by hearing.*

III. It is very necessary and useful for people to be persuaded of this, that the Lord hath appointed this ordinance of preaching for begetting of saving faith, that they may be moved to have high thoughts of this ordinance, and may ply it more carefully and diligently: for the apostle thought it worth his pains, to prove at length, and now to conclude, That *faith cometh by hearing.*

IV. It is not every discourse of a minister, that will prove a mean for begetting of faith, even tho' it be most polished, and most for the people's palate; but the sincere unfolding of the mind of God recorded in his word, the free and faithful preaching of that will do, if any preaching do: *Faith cometh by hearing*; but it must be a *hearing of the word of God.*

V. The serious belief and consideration of the connection which God hath made between the preaching of the word, and that faith without which there is no salvation, would still and calm folks spirits, that swell and rise against this ordinance as useless and burdensome: for this argument he useth to satisfy the Jews who were offended with his preaching to the Gentiles; *So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

VERSE 18. *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into*

all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

BEfore he close this argument, touching the taking in of the Gentiles, which he has been speaking of from the 14th verse, he clearerth one thing which was the ground of all, to wit, that the gospel was now preached un'o the Gentiles: *But I say, Have they not heard?* that is, Have not the Gentiles heard the sound of the gospel? *Yes verily,* says he, there is no question of this: *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world;* that is, the sound and words of the apostles, preaching the gospel, is gone far and wide; it is not now closed within one kingdom, as sometime it was; but, as David speaks of the heavens, Psal. xix. 4. (to which the apostle doth allude) which speak not out God's glory to one people or language, but send their line and their speech to all parts without exception, even to the ends of the earth: so this glorious work of redemption, and excellent light of the gospel of the Sun of righteousness, is not now sending forth its line or beam, it is not now speaking, or spoken, to one kingdom, but is gone thro' the earth, and to the end of the world, that is, to all kindreds and nations, without preferring one to another; there are none now excluded.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. We may lawfully make use of scripture expressions, in venting our mind and judgment touching any point of truth, providing it be done reverently and edifyingly, and so allude unto such or such a place of scripture, for the apostle doth so allude here unto these words, Psal. xix. 4.: *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world,*

II. Tho' God thought it fit, for his own holy ends, to have the means of grace kept for a long time within the compass of Judea, for the most part, and thereby privilege

vilege them beyond all the world beside, as we see, Psal. cxlvii. 19. 20. lxxviii. 1. 2. lxxxi. 4. 5. and Deut. iv. 33, 34. and v. 25. 26. yet now, in the days of the gospel, he will have the news of life going further abroad in the world; and now there is no kindred and language excepted; the gospel is confined to no one place or country as before: *Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went unto the end of the world, &c.*

III. As God thought fit to enlarge the bounds of the gospel, and of the kingdom of Christ, and take in many more countries beside the Jews, and accordingly enlarged the commission given to his apostles, confining them first unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Mat. x. 6. but afterward giving them commission to go to all nations, Mat. xxviii. 19.; so, accordingly, the apostles were diligent and painful, and went far and near preaching the tidings of salvation; and God blessed their pains wonderfully, so that, in a short time, the gospel spread far and wide, notwithstanding of the opposition of enemies; and thus in the womb of the morning, Christ had the dew of his youth, Psal. cx. 3.: *Their sound* (that is, the sound of the apostles, who were sent and authorised of God,) *went in to all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* See Col. i. 6. 23. Rom. xv. 19. and the history of the Acts of the Apostles.

VERSES 19. 20. *But I say, Did not Israel know? First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

ANent the inbringing of the Gentiles the apostle goeth on here to confirm the same more clearly out of scrip-

ture, and that with a check and reproof given to the Jews for their ignorance of this point: They had no good-will to the Gentiles at all, and could not hear of their being taken in to the church, in patience, and therefore forbade the apostles to speak to the Gentiles, 1 Theff. ii. 16. yea, such among them as turned believers, were not without much ado brought to yield to this, Acts xi. 2. 3.: Now this their ignorance of this truth flowed not from want of information, for it was frequently foretold by the prophets of old, with whose doctrine they pretended great acquaintance. Now says he, *Hath not Israel known?* Can Israel pretend ignorance of this? seeing it is so fully confirmed out of the prophets, for *First, Moses saith, &c.* here he citeth a passage out of Deut. xxxii. 21. where the Lord by Moses threateneth to give his people a meeting, and to pay them home in their own coin. They moved him to jealousy with that which was not God: they set up other gods in his room, and gave that worship and service which was due to him alone, to such as were not true gods, to stocks and stones, and to the work of their own hands, and so preferred strangers to him: Now the Lord threatened to retaliate them, for it is said, *I will provoke you to jealousy by those that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you,* where he followeth the Seventy, turning the third person into the Second; and the meaning is, As they have vexed and provoked me, so will I vex and disgust them; as they have taken others in my room, so will I take others in their room: I shall anger and vex them; by taking into their room the Heathens, *who are no people, but a foolish nation;* even such as they account fools, and no people, not worthy of any respect or favour; I shall set these in their place. The next passage which he citeth is out of Isa. lxxv. 1. where also he followeth the Seventy, with a little inversion; and because it was something clearer he would have them heeding it more

more narrowly, and therefore says, that *Esaïas* was very bold; that is, spoke not darkly or figuratively, but in plain terms, and without fear did declare this truth; and what was it? *I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me*; that is, Such people as never once had mind of me; nor took pains for me; I put it in their heart to seek me, and they came speed; (it is a prophecy of something to be, and it is put in the preterite time, to shew its certainty,) I made myself to be found of them (for so the Hebrew word imports,) that sought me not; and I made myself manifest as a reconciled God to these who asked not for me, and looked not as my people; or, I am sought to by them that have not asked aught of me, as Isa. lii. 15. and lv. 5.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. When folks are blinded with prejudice against any truth, they wilfully close their eyes at clear and manifest evidences thereof, and will not see what otherways they might clearly perceive: tho' Moses and the prophets gave evidence to this truth, that the Gentiles should be called in at length, yet they could not heartily welcome this truth; *Did not Israel know?* they should and might have known, but they did not.

II. The scriptures are able to make the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished, so as the way to be well acquainted with all necessary truths is, to be well versed in the scriptures, and acquainted with God's mind there: *Did not Israel know?* &c. is as much as if he had said, If Israel had well tried the sayings of Moses and the prophets, they had not been ignorant of the churching of the Gentiles.

III. As it is a great shame for professors, and such as profess great acquaintance with the word of God, to be ignorant of truths clearly revealed therein; so it is necessary and useful sometimes, that ministers make such sensible of their ignorance, to

their shame: therefore doth Paul publickly put this question to them, the more to convince them and others of their ignorance, *Did not Israel know?* It is a shame that Israel, that professeth great acquaintance with the law and the prophets, should be ignorant of this.

IV. Whatever excellencies and external advantages a people may have, yet so long as they are strangers unto the covenant with promises, and have not the ordinances of life among them, and the gospel manifested, and glad tidings of salvation thro' a Mediator, they are in no account with God, but as no people: *I will provoke them to jealousy by them that are no people.*

V. Let a people have never so much insight in the things of nature, and be endued with learning and worldly wisdom, Acts xvii. 18. 1 Cor. i. 20. yea, and have some knowledge of a Godhead, so far as the light of nature will help them to, Rom. i. 20. 21. 22.; yet so long as they are strangers to the saving knowledge of God, and of the way to life eternal thro' him, they are but foolish; had they never so much profound knowledge of natural things, and of state matters, and the like, they are but fools in God's account; and the true and saving knowledge of God makes fools otherwise, to become wise before God, and to be in account, *I will anger them by a foolish nation.*

VI. Free grace can lay hold upon a foolish people, and a people who are not worthy to be accounted a people, and advance them to great dignity and honour, *I will provoke them to jealousy by them that are no people, and a foolish nation*; that is, he would enter in covenant with them, and make them his people.

VII. When a people or nation break covenant with God, and give him not that single and conjugal love which is his due, but take other things in his room, God will be provoked to break the contract of marriage with them, and espouse others in their

their place, *I will provoke them to jealousy by them that are no people, &c.*

VIII. Oftentimes God in punishing his people, will pay them home in their own coin, and write their sin upon their rod, the more to convince them of their sinfulness; therefore says the Lord, *as they have moved me to jealousy, and provoked me to anger, so shall I provoke them to jealousy, and anger them*: He threatened to give them a meeting, and accordingly did so.

IX. It is a greater punishment to people who have been in covenant with God, when he takes such in their room as they thought least of, and did most contemn and undervalue; and the more despicable and contemptible they be, whom God taketh in the place of others, tho' it be a greater mercy in itself, yet it is so much the greater punishment unto them: *I will provoke them to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger them.*

From verſe 20. OBSERVE,

I. Howbeit people be ready to be displeased at freedom in ministers, yet it is their duty to reveal the truths of God plainly and freely, without feud or favour. It is commendable in the ministers of the Lord to use freedom and boldness in delivering their message, *Eſaias was very bold, &c.*

II. As by nature people are strangers unto God, so do they live without him, and are not desiring the knowledge of the Most High, but they are turning their backs upon him; they are not desirous of communion with him, *They ask not for him, they seek him not.* See Pſal. xiv. 1. 2. 3. Eph. iv. 18. Tit. iii. 3. Gal. iv. 8.

III. God in his rich mercy can prevent with grace even such as have no mind to him, and can lay hold on such as turn their backs on him, and are altogether careless as to everlasting happiness. *I was found of them that sought me not; and was made manifest unto them that asked not for me.* He can put it in their hearts to seek him, so that kindness kyth in his bosom first.

IV. Whoever have the gospel laid open unto them, they have found the richest treasure imaginable; and there only where the gospel is unfolded, is the Lord, who is most excellent and comely, set forth to view, and there he is seen and manifested; and in other places of the world, his glory (expressed in the dim letters of the creation) is hid, his excellency is not manifested. In the church alone he manifests himself, in his goodness, power, mercy, truth and justice; in this respect *he was found and made manifest unto such as sought him not.*

VERSE 21. *But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

NOW from the place last cited, viz. from Isa. lxx. 1. 2. he clearth the matter of the inbringing of the Gentiles, and that by clearing the grounds upon which the Lord was pleased to cast off the Jews, and to take the Gentiles in their room, *But to Israel, (or against Israel, or of Israel) he saith, All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.* The apostle followeth the Seventy's interpretation, who render that one word signifying rebellious, contumacious, and refractory, by two words, the one signifying such a disobedient person as is contumacious, incorrigible, impersuadable, stubbornly disobedient, and unbelieving; the other signifying a contradicting both in word, Luke xx. 17. and in deed, Luke ii. 34. This was the meeting which God got at their hands, whom he invited both by his servants the prophets, and his courtesies, most tenderly and affectionately, as a loving father or mother stretcheth out their arms to imbrace their daunted children; and this he did not once or twice, but with great patience and longanimity all day long, ever since the day brake up wherein he took them to be his own people, and therefore his patience expired, and he was

weary in shewing kindness to them (all this is metaphorically spoken, the more to convince us both of his tender affection and long-suffering) and he would cast them off as unworthy incorrigible branches now for that cause.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. When ministers have to do with exasperated and enraged people, who are also filled with prejudice, they would do well so to hold forth the grounds of God's controversy, as these exasperated persons may see they have God immediately to do with, as taking notice of their carriage, as the apostle doth here; he will not speak any thing as from himself touching God's controversy with them, for which cause he did unchurch them, but he cites a passage clearly speaking the thing, *But to Israel be faith, All day long, &c.*

II. It is no new thing to see a people externally in covenant with God, and loaded with many favours and courtesies, turn altogether disobedient, refractory and rebellious, and cast at all God's commandments, and turn altogether incorrigible, that no favours will better them, no dispensations will work upon them, but they will still wax worse and worse; *Even Israel was turned rebellious.*

III. When people once cast off the yoke of God's laws, and will not be obedient unto his precepts, they turn so perverse and desperately wicked, that they cross God to his face, as it were, and contradict his servants at length; and are not afraid to oppose the work of God, and to set themselves in opposition to any good; they were *rebellious and disobedient*, and they turned *gain saying* likewise.

IV. When God has taken a people by the hand, he is loth to give up with them at the first; many wrongs will he suffer at

their hands before he give them a bill of divorce, and long waits he on, and forbears to cast them off, waiting for their repentance and amendment: *All day long he stretcheth out his hand to them.* See Jer. vii. 13. and xi. 7.

V. Not only doth God delay to smite a people and cut them off, when their carriage deserves nothing less at his hands, but also he will be dealing by all fair means to gain them, and therefore sends out his servants to request, obtest and beseech them to return; and by his sweet and tender dispensations (which might allure any body to draw near him) invites and earnestly calleth upon them back again, *he stretcheth out his hand*; he offers great kindness to them, and to welcome them with all his heart, and to pass by their iniquities, if they would but come.

VI. So headstrong are a people in their sinful courses of defection; when once they break loose, and cast off the fear of God, that no allurements, no invitations, no persuasions, no gentle dealing, no pardon, no forbearance, can prevail with them to bring them back, but they will down the brae, tho' they should break their neck; they will be *rebellious and gain saying* still, although God should *stretch out his hand* never so long, *even all day.*

VII. When mercies and kindnesses are thus abused, and God's goodness is turned into lasciviousness, and the more gentle he is towards them they grow the worse; his jealousy will burn at length, and he will spare that people no longer, but will cast them out of covenant, and out of doors as incorrigible children. This is the ground upon which the Lord had unchurched the Jews, they were *a rebellious and gain saying people*, notwithstanding that God *stretcheth out his hands all the day long* unto them. See Jer. vii. 13. 14. 15. Acts xiii. 45.

CHAPTER XI.

IN this chapter the apostle proceedeth to clear that which he was saying touching the rejecting of the Jews, by clearing two objections: The one from the beginning unto verse 11. and thereby cleareth, that notwithstanding of this sentence of rejection gone out against the Jews, there are some of them who shall be saved. The next objection is answered from verse 11. to verse 33. and thereby he cleareth, that the sentence is not final and irrevocable; that nation shall not lie under that condition always, but at length shall be enchurch'd again. And then thirdly, he concludes the whole disputes, from chap. ix. ver. 1. with a grave and weighty epiphonema, tending to admire and extol the wisdom, knowledge, decrees and providence of God in these mysteries.

VERSES 1. 2. *I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.---*

THAT the apostle may clear fully the doctrine touching the rejection of the Jews, and the inbringing of the Gentiles, he starteth some objections, and then answereth them. The first is here, and it may be thus taken up: If God hath thus cast off the people of the Jews, and unchurch'd them, then he hath cast off his chosen people, his own peculiar ones, even those whom he had chosen to himself before all eternity. But this is absurd. *I say then, Hath God cast away his people?* By your doctrine (would the objector say) you seem to say, that there is no salvation for the Jews now, but they are wholly cut off from the covenant and hope of mercy. He answereth, *God forbid.* Notwithstanding that God has unchurch'd the bulk and body of the Jewish nation; yet he has not forgotten his own peculiar ones, whom he hath elected from eternity. The first

reason to prove this, is, *For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, and tribe of Benjamin,* that is, God hath chosen me, and hath not cast me off, and so he hath not cast off all the people of the Jews, *for I am an Israelite; I am descended of noble Israel, and am of the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin.* The next reason is, *ver. 2. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.* In and among the people of Israel there is some whom God hath from eternity elected unto life, and hath foreknown as his darlings, and beloved ones; and these he hath not cast away; and so he hath not cast off all the people of Israel.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' truths be never so much cleared, enemies thereto, who are but cavilers, will still have something to object against it; for here is new objections again to be answered: *I say then, &c.*

II. Whatever opposition cavillers and enemies to truth make against it, it will be so far from being a loser thereby, that it will come forth more victorious, and glorious, than before; so that objections do

but serve to rub the rust off truths: upon occasion of these objections the apostle clearth the truth, touching the rejection of the Jews, better.

III. It is an ordinary thing for proud professors, who are void of the life of grace, to swell so with conceit of themselves, as to think they are the true people of God, and that if he should deal with them as with unbelieving hypocrites, he should fail of his special promises: This is the ground of the objection; they thought if God had unchurched them, and cast them out of the compass of the covenant, he had cast off his own people: *Hath God cast away his people?*

IV. Tho' God be chastising and punishing nations and kingdoms; and sending such universal strokes, as folk would think he were respecting no persons; yet in the mean time he hath an eye unto his own, and whatever way he be dealing with his enemies, he will not forget his own children, to these he will keep covenant for ever; so that be his dispensations what they will towards false-hearted friends, real believers shall never have just cause to complain of his dealing with them: *Hath God cast off his people? God forbid.*

V. God may be avenged on a hypocritical nation, and for their contempt of the gospel may unchurch them, and take the gospel from them, and yet be as good as his word unto any true-hearted seeker of his face in that land. Altho' there may be many sincere-hearted believers in a land, to whom God will shew kindness; yet may he justly pursue a quarrel against the land, and take the gospel from it; as he did unchurch the body and bulk of the Jewish nation, notwithstanding there were of his people among them, whom he would not cast off: *Hath God cast off his people? God forbid.*

VI. Let bowls roll as they please, and let God's dispensations towards a land be what they will, tho' he should even be giving them a bill of divorce; yet true

believers should never draw hard conclusions therefrom, or once in the least suspect God's faithfulness in his promises toward them: A thick cloud of sad dispensations towards the generality of a land, should neither darken the interest of believers in a promise, nor dim the sight of their faith of his faithfulness and constancy: therefore says he, *God forbid*; this were most absurd and abominable: let matters go as they please, faith should never question God's love and fidelity, or move the question, *Hath he cast off his people?*

VII. However Satan labour by all means to keep believers from a clear uptaking of their interest in Christ, and they have a false heart within them that is ready to comply with Satan's designs; and there be many windings and turnings of a false heart, that may make it hard for a poor soul to win to read his name in the book of life; yet believers may, thro' God's grace searching themselves, and improving the means appointed of God for attaining to a thorough persuasion in this, win to some full assurance of *hope*, Heb. vi. 11. and of *understanding*, Col. ii. 2. and of *faith*, Heb. x. 22. and to a *persuasion*, 2 Tim. i. 12. Rom. viii. 38.: therefore says Paul, *For I also am an Israelite*, &c.

VIII. Tho' believers, when they have a clear call, may lawfully profess and avouch their interest in Christ, yet it should be done with great sobriety and moderation, without pride or affectation; for the apostle doth in modesty forbear to express what he thought, and therefore leaves it to be gathered from his words, that he was one of God's real children, and says no more, but *I also am an Israelite*, &c.

IX. No external honours or grandeur, nor external church privileges, will exempt sinners from God's wrath and vengeance; God will punish the great as well as the mean, and the church-member that resteth upon that privilege no less than others; *For*, says he, *I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin*:

And

And so telling us, that God had cut off such, seeing he says, *I also*; even such as were no proselites, but Jews by nation, sprung out of the loins of noble Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that by Rachel, a lawful wife, whom Jacob loved best.

X. Tho' external privileges and church-membership should not be rested on, nor made a screen to hide us from the displeasure of God; yet should they not be despised or undervalued, but honoured as great favours of God, and sometimes with holy sobriety and humility of spirit, they may be avouched and openly professed, when it may serve to glorify God; therefore Paul doth here declare and avouch what he was, *an Israelite of the seed of Abraham*, &c. and so a church-member.

XI. Tho' there were but one true hearted believer among thousands of professors, to whom God were doing good, and whom he were owning as his chosen, when his dispensations were full of anger, and changed toward the rest; yet this were enough to persuade us of God's faithfulness in keeping covenant to his own for ever; *For I am an Israelite*, &c. as if he had said, I am one instance, and that may serve to confirm the point, that he has not cast off his true people.

XII. As God knoweth all things from eternity, even our *thoughts afar off*, Psalm cxxxix. 2. and all mankind are in the chalk of his eye, to whom nothing can be future or past; so hath he particularly set his eye upon so many of the children of Adam as he thought fit, and chosen them from among the rest, to be objects of his wonderful love and kindness, and according to his everlasting purpose, which is not a blind act, but an act of wonderful knowledge, joined with unparalleled affection: There are some whom *he hath foreknown*. See Rom. viii. 29. 2 Tim. ii. 19. 1 Pet. i. 2.

XIII. Whatever God's dispensations be towards his chosen ones in a world, yet his *loving kindness will be never take from them*, Psalm lxxxix. 33. so that such as God hath

once set his affection upon, and known in a special manner for his own from all eternity, shall never be decourted again, or cast utterly out of God's favour; and this everlasting love and foreknowledge of God is the only basis of their stability, and the anchor of their safety: *God hath not cast off his people whom he foreknew.*

VERSES 2. 3. 4. --- *Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,*

Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

A Third argument, clearing and illustrating the matter he is upon, is taken from the state and condition of the church in the days of Elias: Moreover, would he say, It is not I only that am left, but there are many more; and so it is abundantly clear that God has not cast off his people. So then his argument lieth thus: If it fare with the church of the Jews now, as it did with them in the days of Elias, then God hath not cast off his people; for then he reserved seven thousand that did not apostatize: But it fareth with the church of the Jews now as it did then. So then he layeth down the condition of the church in Elias's days, verses 2. 3. 4. and then applieth it, and sheweth how it suiteth with their present case, verse 5. In his citing this story out of 1 Kings xix. 14. &c. he doth not cite the whole story, but so much as made for his purpose; nor doth he cite what he citeth, in that order in which it is set down, only he cites the sum and substance thereof, and saith, *Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias?* Know ye not that notour story about Elias, and what the scripture saith of him?

or in that story how, when he was making intercession to God, he had a sad complaint of Israel, and spoke against them, saying, 1. *Lord, they have killed thy prophets*; Ahab and Jezebel have commanded them to be killed, and the people said nothing against it: 2. *And digged down thine altars*; they have been so busy in erecting and establishing their own idolatrous worship, that they have quite overturned thy worship and service: 3. *And I am left alone*; thro' the cruelty and persecution of the court, there are few or none, that I can find, avouching thee and thy worship, but I alone: 4. *And they seek my life*; Jezebel, that wicked woman, has threatened to cut me off, 1 Kings xix. 2. and so there shall be no church at all. Now, tho' Elias was a prophet, and an eminent man, yet he was in a great mistake here; for *what saith the answer of God unto him?* God gives him a divine oracle and response, and what saith God? *I have reserved to myself seven thousand men that have not bowed the knee to Baal*; I have preserved to my own worship and service some faithful servants, seven thousand that would not commit idolatry, and forsake my worship, that would not bow their knee before Baal, in sign of subjection; I have kepted so many, tho' thou knewest not of them, free from the corruption of the times, and from the idolatry of this age; and so they were not all left of me, and cast off as reprobate silver, but I had a care of them, and would not suffer them to backslide with the rest.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Acquaintance with the state of the church in former ages, recorded in scripture, is very necessary for the people of God, and will tend much to edify and comfort them in their particular conditions; and therefore he brings in the example of the state of the church in a former age, to instruct them at that time, touching the

present state of affairs, saying, *What ye not what the scripture saith?*

II. Our ignorance of God's dispensations toward his church and people in former ages and generations, makes us account our present case, in respect of God's dispensations, to be singular and unparalleled; and therefore to rectify their mistake here, who possibly would have thought God's dispensations with the Jews strange, he refereth them to God's dispensations to his church in Elias's time, saying, *What ye not what the scripture saith of Elias?*

III. A visible church may turn so corrupt and perverse, that the faithful servants of God, who would gladly have had them doing well, and have used all means to reclaim them, can do nothing but lay out their bitter complaint of them and their carriage to God; and it is sad when ministers, after all their pains among a people, shall be put to give in a libel against them for their misdemeanours: Elias was put to this, *to make intercession against Israel*.

IV. Let the faithful servants of God be banished from home and harbour, and have no body to lay out the grief of their heart unto; yet be where they will, they have the Lord to lay open their mind unto; *Elias made intercession to God against Israel*: he had God to go to, even when he was forced to fly, and to hide himself in caves, and look no man in the face.

V. A land which once has been famous for purity of worship, and the power of religion, maintained and practised in it, may come to that height of defection, as to root out all true religion, and banish, yea, and kill, the faithful and honest servants of God, for maintaining the truth and purity of God's worship, against corruptions and innovations: *Elias made intercession against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets*.

VI. Whatever disrespect be shown unto the servants of the Lord, and how few soever

soever there be to own them in their sufferings; yet they are dear to God, and he owns them as his, when they are least in account in the world, even when persecuted, banished, and killed, they are his; no sad strokes upon them will make the Lord misken them, nor any sad condition they can fall into, will make him to disown them, But rather it will endear them the more to him: *They have killed thy prophets.*

VII. As such as have an interest in God as their master, may, notwithstanding thereof, meet with many sad and uncouth dispensations, and unchristian usage at the hands of men; so it is a black and sad omen, and prognosticates little good to come on a land, when the rulers thereof are persecuting the faithful servants of God, for no cause but their faithful discharge of their duty, as messengers of the Lord of hosts: Such work as this doth preface no less than black ruin to the work of God in that land; *Lord, says he, they have killed thy prophets, and then it followeth, and digged down thine altars.* These two do ordinarily go together, the overturning of the work of God in a land, and the persecuting of his messengers.

VIII. It is no strange thing to see the powers of the world employing their power against God, and overturning the work of reformation, in the place where God has made them rulers, and openly violate a sacred covenant, sworn with the Most High, in a most solemn manner: Here Ahab and Jezebel *digged down God's altars*, that is, they overturned his worship and the good work of reformation there, and withal it is said in the place cited, that *they forsook the covenant, and then threw down the altars*, 1 Kings xix. 14. So that when men have cast off all respect to a covenant, and the oath of God, then there is nothing so abominable but they will do it, were it even the digging down of what God has erected in doctrine or worship.

IX. What the rulers of a land do in

overturning the work of God, and putting all topsy-turvy, will be interpreted as the deed of the whole land, when there are none to protest openly against these sinful proceedings; for here tho' it was only the wicked king, and his idolatrous queen Jezebel, with a malignantly disposed court, which did kill the prophets, 1 Kings xviii. 4.; yet it is accounted the deed of the whole land, because they ran, for the most part, the way with the corrupt court, and did not dissent from what was done, nor manifest their dislike thereof; therefore *Elias makes intercession against Israel, and says, they killed the prophets, &c.*

X. Altho' in a time when temptation like a flood over-runs a whole land, many may be kept by the mighty hand of God, from being wholly carried down by the torrent; yet there may be few, who thro' dastardly timorousness and fear, who will stand in the breaking in of waters, and avouch the truth upon all hazards: for here, altho' there were many kept from bowing the knee to Baal, yet Elias was left alone, as to any open avouching of the cause of Christ; they may get grace to believe, who have not grace to suffer; and *I am left alone.*

XI. So cruel and insatiable is the rage of the enemies of Christ, that if there were but one remaining to give testimony against their corruptions, they cannot be at rest till that one be made a sacrifice to their beastly savage cruelty; nothing will satisfy them but the utter extirpation of all that will own Christ's cause, and stand to the defence thereof: *I am left alone, and they seek my life.*

XII. Whatever condition the servants of God be in, they are allowed to draw near to God, and to lay it open before him, and the greater their straits and difficulties be, they should be pressed the more in to him; and their condition can never be such as to externals in a world, but they may make an errand of it to go to God; for he here complaineth to God, that *they seek*

seek his life, and so that he is chased from one place to another, and cannot get a life.

XIII. A tender soul cannot but resent, and be deeply affected with, the sad and calamitous condition of the servants of Jesus Christ, and of his work in their hands; their straits and hard conditions go as near the heart of a true and tender child of God, as their own doth: *Lord, says he, they have slain thy prophets, and digged down thine altars*; this goeth to his heart, no less than when they *seek his own life*.

XIV. Let the faithful servants of Christ be banished from king, court, country and kindred, and have no access with their petitions and desires; or if they be permitted to petition, yet receive no gracious answers; yet they have an open door to the court of heaven, and their petitions shall not be cast over that bar, but they shall certainly receive an answer: And they can never meet with so thick a cloud of calamities, as shall intercept the beams of God's gracious countenance, or hinder their sweet and heavenly correspondence with him: While the prophet is put to fly for his life, and can hardly find a place to stay in, yet there is a sweet intercourse betwixt God and him, and his petitions are heard, and he gets an answer: *But what saith the answer of God unto him?*

XV. As God who knoweth all things, and to whom nothing is hid, but all things are naked and bare, knoweth perfectly the sincerity of every ones heart; so he will take special notice of such as hold by him in an evil day, tho' no body else should do so: Though the prophet knew not that there was any sincere-hearted Israelite to the fore at this time, supposing that those of whom Obadiah told him were some way or other killed and destroyed; yet the Lord knew and owned them saying, *I have reserved to myself seven thousand*.

XVI. As the best of God's servants may be in a mistake sometimes; so his own prophets, when they are not acted by the Spirit of the God of truth, but follow their

own carnal apprehensions, may speak without book, and vent their own mistakes; so that the Spirit of the Lord is only to be rested on; for Elias said that *he only was left*, and yet the Lord had *seven thousand*: *I have reserved to myself seven thousand*.

XVII. However strong the current of a temptation be in a land; yet God may and often will preserve many of his own, so as they shall not be carried headlong with the rest, in a day of defection, for here, tho' king and queen, court and parliament, and all, were carrying on a course of apostacy and defection; yet there was seven thousand reserved: *I have reserved to myself seven thousand*.

XVIII. It is no small comfort and encouragement unto a gracious soul, to hear of the steadfastness and stability of any person in the day of temptation and trial; for the gracious answer which God gives him is, that there are seven thousand reserved; *What saith the answer of God? I have reserved unto myself seven thousand*.

XIX. As God is ready and willing to rectify the mistakes of his servants; so a gracious soul will be so far from being grieved and discontented, when corrected as to its apprehension of things, that it may and will read much love in such a dispensation of God's: God here rectifies Elias's mistake, and that by a gracious answer to him, and doubtless Elias was satisfied with rectifying of his apprehensions: *I have reserved to myself, &c.*

XX. The church of God upon earth is not always shining in brightness and splendor, so that any body may perceive the same; but is sometimes at so low an ebb, that the most discerning Christian shall hardly perceive any face of a visible church; for Elias could not see it here, supposing there was none to the fore but himself; and though there was seven thousand, yet he knew not of it: *I have reserved to myself seven thousand, &c.*

XXI. The ground of the saints stability in a shaking time of trial, is not any thing

in themselves, but only the power of God keeping them unshaken in a day of temptation: *I have reserved to myself*, says he.

XXII. Although men may think themselves free and safe, however externally they carry themselves toward an idol, or that which is not God, if their heart, as they think, be right, and not worship that idol; yet the very external bowing of the knee, in a state of worship, is idolatry before God; we *must not bow down to them*, Command 2d. For here the *seven thousand did not bow the knee to the image of Baal*, and so were free from idolatry.

XXIII. Howbeit men may look upon the bowing of the knee in an act of worship, as an indifferent thing, and a reverent gesture, even tho' before that which is not God; yet it is a prime and principal act of idolatry; for it is here put for the whole; and thereby we adore that which we worship in such a manner, kneeling being a sign of adoration, as it is performed to that which we conceive to be God, and profess our subjection thereunto, and a dependance thereupon, all which is due to God only: --- *That have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal*.

XXIV. When a people or a person fall-eth from their integrity, and former purity of worship, and so apostatizeth or backslideth, they are apt then to be cast off of God, and unchurched: this defection from the purity of worship, to a worshipping we know not what, and after a manner of our own devising, is a sin provoking God to reject a people, as not being his; for here is the nerves of the apostle's argument, he proveth that God had not unchurched all the Jews in the days of Elias, because he had reserved seven thousand from that defection and apostasy which others fell into: *I have reserved to myself seven thousand, that have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal*.

VERSES 5. 6. *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherways grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherways work is no more work.

IN the 5th verse he applieth the example, which he made use of before, to his present purpose, saying, That as in the days of Elias there was a remnant preserved from the corruption and apostacy of the times, so is there now a remnant or reservation made; and then he sheweth the rise and first fountain of this, viz. that it is *according to the election of grace*; or, according to his free and gracious election: and this he further amplifieth and cleareth, ver. 6. by the contrary; *If by grace, then it is no more of works*, &c. If this election flow from free grace, then it flows not from works, foreseen or done; and if from works, it floweth not from grace; for there is a contrariety and inconsistency between grace and works; they cannot dwell together but the one always excludes the other: grace were no more grace, if it were not free, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. In a time of great defection and apostacy in a land, when a whole land is overrun, as with an inundation, there may be a number who have kept their hands clean, and are free of the contagion; for at that time when the body and bulk of the Jewish nation had rejected the Messiah, there was a remnant.

II. As there are but few, in comparison to the rest of the world, whom God hath chosen to himself from eternity, Matth. xx. 16.; so in a time of defection in a land there will be but a small company reserved from the deluge, even but a remnant; *At this present time also there is a remnant*.

III. The rise of a poor soul's steadfastness in a day of fearful declining and apostacy, is God's setting his heart upon him from eternity, and choosing him out from the rest of mankind; and nothing in him-

self: *There is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

IV. There was nothing in man, or foreseen to be in man, which moved God to set his everlasting love upon him, and choose him to himself to be an heir of glory; but he did it merely out of his own good-will and pleasure, for his honour, and the glory of his free grace: This election is most free, and flows from God's mere grace, good-will and favour, and therefore is called *election of grace*, or a gracious, free and undeserved election.

V. Whom God elected unto life, out of his mere free grace and love, these he purposed certainly and infallibly to bring to the actual possession of the crown, and hath purposed so to order his dispensations towards them, as that they shall undoubtedly be possessed of that life which they are destinated unto; for from this same act of election floweth their deliverance from the torrent of a backsliding time: *There is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

VI. Whoever expects any thing of God for their works, or by way of merit, they quite destroy the nature of grace, and must of necessity take what they take so, as no fruit of grace or free love: *For if it be by grace, it is no more of works; otherways grace is no more grace.*

VII. As we must not expect any thing of God by way of strict merit, so neither must we join works and grace together, or expect any thing partly by way of grace, and partly by way of merit, for they are incompatible; there is such an inconsistency between grace and works, that they cannot concur as con-causes, the one doth always destroy the other; so that it always holds good, what is of grace, is not of works; and what is of works, is not of grace; one thing cannot be both due by way of merit, and a gift of free grace: *If it be of grace, it is no more of works; otherways grace is no more grace; &c.*

VERSE 7. *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*

THE answer to the objection proposed in the beginning, is more clearly set down, as a clear conclusion from his former grounds; and that it may be more advertised to, he sets it down after his usual manner, by way of a dialogue; *What then?* What is the conclusion of these reasons of yours? what is the sum of your answer? what is your judgment touching the state of the Jews at this time? or what is the answer to the objection? It is this, says he, *Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for*; the carnal body and bulk of the nation of the Jews, have not obtained righteousness and salvation, which was the thing they pretended to be most busy about the seeking, and most desirous of: *but the election hath obtained it*; there was, for all that, a number who belonged to the election of grace, and these, by virtue of their election, as being chosen of God to life, hath obtained it: *and the rest were hardened*; the rest who were not chosen of God, were plagued with a hard heart, for not welcoming the offer of the Messias, and so could not obey the voice of the Lord, being thus hardened; there was a thick skin drawn over heart and eyes, and all, in God's righteous judgment, as a fruit of their reprobation, that made them senseless and hard-hearted.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' God hath made many sweet promises of coming speed, to such as seek the Lord and his righteousness with all their heart, in the right use of means, and for the right end, and in faith, Math. vii. 7. and xxi. 22. John xiv. 13. xv. 16. and xvi. 24. James i. 6. and iv. 3. yet many may seek after righteousness and life, who shall, notwithstanding, shoot short, and miss their mark, even tho' they seem serious

serious to themselves and others in seeking, thro' mistaking the way; as *Israel* did here, who obtained not that which they sought for, they missed righteousness and life both, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, Rom. ix. 31. 32. and x. 3. See Matth. vii. 21.

II. Many may live long within the visible church, and be admitted to partake of many privileges as church-members, and enjoy the ordinances of life, and do much as to external performances in these ordinances, and yet come short of heaven; *Israel*, even *Israel*, famous *Israel*, the children of Jacob, the only honoured people, did not obtain that which they sought for, in the use of these ordinances which they had among their hands.

III. The elect of God, on whom he has set his love from eternity, shall certainly obtain righteousness and life eternal; seeing he who loved them is unchangeable, and foresaw whatever was to be in time; and so whatever might provoke him in time to keep them out of heaven, he foresaw that from eternity, and notwithstanding thereof did appoint and foreordain them to life, and so they cannot miss that which God in his everlasting decree hath carved out for them: *The election hath obtained it.*

IV. From this free election of God, and from nothing in themselves, floweth this certainty and infallibility of salvation; this is the first rise, and *primum mobile* of all the real difference which in time is put betwixt the elect and others; therefore it is said, *the election hath obtained it*, instead of *the elect*, to lead us up unto the rise and fountain of this difference, viz. God's electing love. And whatever pains we be at for heaven, and whatever means we use at God's command for that end, yet the glory of all is due to him, who first choosed us, and set his affection upon us, for that is the spring and well-head of all.

V. Howbeit the Lord has a certain kind of respect towards all mankind, as being the work of his hands; yet there is a cer-

tain special love, destinating to life eternal, and this all are not objects of, but a few chosen ones, according to the Lord's good pleasure: there is an election; and some that are left, and all mankind are one of these two: *The election hath obtained it, but the rest were hardened.*

VI. There is no reprobate, altho' living among the chosen vessels of glory, and enjoying much good by their fellowship, that shall be saved; but whatever flourishes of seeming grace, and seriousness of a desire after heaven they may have, they shall perish eternally: *The rest were hardened, or blinded*; and so it is supposed, that they did not obtain life.

VII. Tho' all such as are reprobated and rejected shall certainly perish, yet the just and righteous Judge sends none to hell merely upon this account that they are not elected, but because of other transgressions which they are guilty of; for here blindness, or hardness, intervenes; *The rest were hardened, or blinded.*

VIII. Tho' the elect themselves, before conversion, be under the power of darkness and hardness, till God renew them, and take away that hard heart, and give them a heart of flesh, according to his covenant and promise; yet full and final obduration of heart, and fearedness, that nothing will prevail with, or work upon, is a certain consequent of reprobation: and all such as are rejected of God shall remain in perpetual darkness, and under the power of hardness, and shall never get a saving sight of the glory of Jesus Christ: *The rest were hardened, or blinded*, notwithstanding of the means of grace.

IX. As there is a natural hardness, stupidity, and senselessness, which lieth upon all by nature till grace remove it; so there is an acquired and habitual hardness, which is contracted thro' a customariness in sinning, and winking wilfully at the shining glances of light: and as men themselves have a sinful hand in procuring this, and the devil also; so the holy Lord hath a

supreme hand, and inflicteth this judicial blindness, as a plague and punishment for their former shutting out of light; for it is said here, *the rest were blinded*, in the passive voice.

X. When a soul is judicially hardened, so that no means can prevail with it, but the more clear the light be which shineth, the blinder it grows, that is a black mark and evidence of future ruin and destruction to come upon that soul: Instead of saying, but the rest were destroyed, or missed happiness, he saith, *the rest were blinded*, expressing the cause of their destruction: See Deut. ii. 30. 1 Sam. ii. 25. Rom. ii. 5. and ix. 17.

VERSES 8. 9. 10. *According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day.*

And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them.

Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

BECAUSE that which he said of the Jews being hardened and blinded, seemed harsh and unpleasant, and a truth which would hardly be digested, and which had several difficulties in it; therefore in these verses he both confirmeth and explaineth the same out of scripture: And, 1. *According*, says he, *as it is written*; and therefore this passage must be a passage cited out of scripture, or else he would not have said, as it is written, *God hath given them the spirit of slumber*, &c. The passage is no where in scripture as it is here set down, but is gathered out of two places of scripture, (the like we saw before, chap. ix. 33.) viz. out of Isa. xxix. 10. with Isa. vi. 9. 10. In the original, Isa. xxix. 10. it is said, *The Lord hath poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep*: in the Seventy (which the apostle followeth in

all these passages, for the most part, tho' they vary in some things from the original, because he was writing to the Gentiles, who only had this version of the Seventy among their hands, and he would not stumble them by citing another, which differed something from what they had.) it is, *He hath given you to drink*; and the apostle here says, *he hath given*; all is one upon the matter: but the Greek word rendered *deep sleep*, signifieth *compunction*, or *remorse*, as it is in the margin; but however the sense will be the same, and both will point forth a mind pertinacious and fixed in evil, so as it cannot be got taken off it; as a man in a deep sleep cannot be awakened, so they are so fast glewed to their ignorance and vanity, as if they were nailed to it: and some think, that in the Alexandrian idiom, the word which signifieth *compunction*, signifieth *a deep sleep*; or it may be such a deep sleep as is procured thro' the pricking and stinging of some venomous beast; or it may be the Seventy have derived the word here used, so as it may have some affinity with the *night*, and so signifieth a deep sleep, such as falls upon folk in the dead of the night. However we find the Seventy hereby understand, a spiritual judgment upon the mind, or any disorder there, whereby it is out of frame; for that word which is rendered, Psalm lx. 3. *astonishment*, they render by the same word which is here used; and so thereby is imported, such a stupidity and deadness as cannot be got easily helped. The other part of the testimony is taken out of Isa. vi. 9. 10. where he citeth not the passage word by word, but gives the meaning and the sum of it.

So then from these passages he proves, that the greatest part of the Jews were blinded. The strength of the probation lieth in these two: 1. That the prophet is to be understood as speaking of the Jews in the days of the Messiah, otherways it had not been pertinent to the purpose: And, 2. that in these places he is speaking

ſpeaking of the generality of the people. Now, the firſt of theſe is clear, viz. that Iſaiah is prophesying of the days of the goſpel, in that it is ſo frequently cited in the New Teſtament, as Matth. xiii. 14. and Acts xxviii. 26. and John tells us ſo much, John xii. 41. ſaying, when he is citing this ſame paſſage out of Iſa. vi. 9. 10. *Theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his glory, and ſpoke of him.* The ſecond is clear in the places cited, where the prophet is ſpeaking of the body and bulk of the land. So then the ſum of the citation is, It was foretold, that God in his juſt judgment ſhould handle them ſo, and pierce them ſo with his judgments, as they ſhould grow ſtupid, ſenſeleſs, and have a cauterized conſcience, feeling nothing; and ſo hard and faſt aſleep, that the news of life ſhould never once get entry; eyes and ears, and all ſhould be cloſed: and then he addeth a word, *unto this day*, to ſhew how this judgment ran thro' all ages, and laſted till that time. See 2 Cor. iii. 15.

The next paſſage is taken out of Pſal. lxi. 22. 23. where the apoſtle followeth the Seventy, as to the ſubſtance (the putting of one word before another and the adding of another, to clear the purpoſe farther, being no way deſtructive to the ſenſe.) In the place cited we read in our tranſlation, [*Let their table become a ſnare before them: and that which ſhould have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.*] But the word rendered *welfare*, ſignifieth alſo *a recompence*, and ſo poſſibly it might be as well rendered, following the apoſtle, (there being nothing conſiderable to ſtand in the way) thus. *Let their table become a ſnare, and a recompence, and a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they cannot ſee, and bow down their back alway.* In the Hebrew it is, *and make their loins continually to ſhake.* But all is to one purpoſe; it ſeemeth to be a metaphor taken from a man under a heavy burden, he cannot get liberty to look up, and his back is unable to bear it, and his loins ſhake and tremble all un-

der him. So then, this paſſage is a piece of David's imprecation, againſt a number of incorrigible, reprobate enemies, and it has in it the force of a prophecy; he uttering theſe things as a prophet, againſt his enemies, or Chriſt's irreconcilable enemies, he being a type of Chriſt; and ſo ſays he, *Let their table*, that is, their delicacies, and other things which they feed upon, their ordinances and enjoyments, *be a ſnare*, to take them in, as a bird is taken; and let it prove ruinous, inſtead of ſaving and feeding to them; *and a trap*, to the ſame purpoſe; but a metaphor taken from the taking of wild beaſts; *and a ſtumbling-block*, a ſtone in their way, whereupon they may fall and break themſelves; *and a recompence*, a reward of their doings, a juſt puniſhment. *Let their eyes be darkened, that they cannot ſee*; let thy judgment come upon their underſtandings, that they may never underſtand the things that concern their peace: *and bow down their back alway*; let them have neither pith nor power to ſtir, as if there was a heavy load upon their back, making it to crack, and their loins to ſhake and tremble: and ſo it is no uncouth thing to ſee ſpiritual judgments poured upon a people; it is but the fulfilling of old prophecies, which as they have the begining of their accompliſhment then; ſo have they a more full accompliſhment in the days of the goſpel.

From verſe 8. OBSERVE,

I. The word of God being given as a rule, miniſters ought to regulate all their ſermons thereby; and utter nothing but what is conſonant and agreeable thereto; and people ought to take nothing upon truſt from men be what they will, but may and ought to try, and examine the doctrine delivered to them by this touch-ſtone; therefore Paul ſays, *According as it is written.*

II. There is no final peremptory viſible judge on earth, to define all controverſies, and to interpret ſcripture; but the Spirit of

of God speaking in the scriptures, is the only judge, and by that Spirit only should the true genuine sense of the scriptures be found out; one place serveth thus to clear another, and what is dark in one, is cleared more fully in another place: for this cause he puteth in the first place two scriptures together, the one serving to clear the other, and the third explaining both, *According as it is written.*

III. Our disputings and reasonings should not be to feed carnal conceit, and to entangle folks in needless and new intricate questions; but it should be so gone about, as may most tend to edification and to clear truth: therefore Paul by this citation or argument further clearerth the nature of obduration, by shewing how God has a hand in it, and what are the effects of it, *According as it is written, the Lord hath given them, &c.*

IV. The scriptures being written by men of God, acted by the Spirit, 2 Pet. i. 21. is fully harmonious in all its parts, each corresponding with another, and no way jarring or contradicting really, whatsoever may appear through the shallowness of our capacities and apprehensions; this is clear, from the apostle's joining two distinct passages, out of distinct places into one, *According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, &c.*

V. There is so much self-love in every one, as that they think better of themselves than they have cause, and so much of a self-deceiving heart in the worst, as will make them unwilling to let it light, that they are under any spiritual stroke; and therefore is the apostle put to prove this judicial stroke out of scripture, and say, *According as it is written.*

VI. This judicial stroke of blindness and hardness, is such a stroke as seizeth upon the whole man, and makes him altogether senseless and stupid, like a very stock, no more sensible of his danger than one in a deep sleep; nor are they in any

near capacity for receiving information; therefore it is called a *spirit of slumber*, or of a deep sleep.

VII. Where this judicial stroke is, all the passages of the soul whereby saving knowledge should come in, are blocked up, all the faculties of the man's soul are so struck with this plague, that tho' he should see wonders every day, and hear this word most clearly preached, all shall be useles; he shall never come to any saving uptaking of God and Christ, tho' he had never to much literal and speculative knowledge; tho' he hath eyes, yet shall he see none, and tho' he hath ears, yet shall he hear none; *God hath given them a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.* See Matth. xiii. 15. Acts xxviii. 27.

VIII. As in the days of the Old Testament, wherein temporal plagues and judgments did most abound, there were many spiritual plagues both threatened and executed; so these threatenings shall have their fuller accomplishment in the days of the gospel; therefore he cites these prophecies out of Isaiah (which had some accomplishment even then) as a confirmation of the present state of the Jews, as having its fuller accomplishment now, in the days of the gospel; *According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, &c.*

IX. However the wicked scoff at the judgment of God, as out of sight, and at the threatenings, as things uncertain; yet they shall find them all come as sure to pass, as if they had them in their hands already; therefore in that xxixth of Isaiah, it is spoken in the preterite time, to shew that it should be as certain as if it were past already: *He hath given a spirit of deep sleep, and here we find it accomplished, the rest he hardened, as it is written, &c.*

X. God, who is the holy One of Israel, hath a high, supreme and holy hand about the very sins of the wicked, and is thereby getting glory to his own name, and doth not carry himself purely indifferently, or carelessly

carelessly in the matter, but hath ordained that it shall come to pass thro' his permission, and hath purposed to order it to his own holy ends. This slumber whereby they see not, nor hear, is a grievous sin, and yet we hear, that *God hath given them the spirit of slumber.*

XI. As God may, and often doth punish such with sin; as we see, Isa. xlv. 18. Rom. i. 26. 27. 2 Thess. ii. 11. 13. so, in particular, he useth so to punish such as refuse to receive information from the word and other means of conviction and light, with stupidity, senselessness and blindness; and this he doth, partly by giving such over unto Satan, that he who *worketh in the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. may frame up the works of darkness in them, and so block up door and window, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and lead them wrong, 2 Thess. ii. 10. 11. *God gave them the spirit of slumber*, or gave way to that evil spirit which works this effect of deadness and slumbering, as his executioner to punish them.

XII. God likewise hardeneth and blindeth the wicked (whom he judicially hath punished) by these means, which thro' his blessing tendeth to the conversion of others; such as, the offers of Christ in the gospel, and the like, which those wicked wretches abuse to their own perdition: and therefore in that Isa. vi. 9. 10. the Lord sends the prophet to preach, and thereby to make their heart fat, and their ears dull that they may not hear, &c. see Mat. xiii. 14. John xii. 40. Acts xix. 9.

XIII. Tho' God approve not of this blindness, nor doth he infuse it into sinners, by making such who had ears to hear, to hear none, and such as were able to see, to see none; yet he withholdeth the grace of light and sense; (not being obliged to any) and gives them so up to Satan and their own corrupt minds, as that certainly their further blindness and deafness doth follow as a penal stroke and punishment upon them; *God gave them the spirit of slumber*; and then followeth, *Eyes*

that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.

XIV. When the Lord is greatly provoked by the carriage of a wicked people abusing his ordinances and shutting their eyes, as Matth. xiii. 15. Acts xxviii. 27. he will fill them with their own ways and send upon them spiritual plagues in great abundance; for in the Hebrew it is, *God hath poured upon them the spirit of a deep sleep.*

XV. Where this blindness and hardness is upon a soul, the clearest light of the gospel will not serve to convince such; but they will remain even blind and senseless when the truth is glancing most excellently; *they were blinded even to this day*, wherein Christ was clearly preached, and his excellency held forth.

XVI. This plague of hardness of heart is a judgment, not of one generation and age, nor a judgment that time will wear out; but rather a plague, that the longer it lasts, the worse it grows, and so proves often (as it were) hereditary, passing from father to son, or from one age to another; for it was among the Jews from Isaiah's days, even to the time of writing this epistle; *Even to this day.*

From Verses 9. 10. OBSERVE,

I. Tho' it were granted that David in his imprecations of evil to his enemies was not altogether free of human passion and frailty at other times; yet in those imprecations here made use of, he was acted by the Spirit, as a prophet foretelling what should come upon the incorrigible enemies of Jesus Christ: for the apostle makes use of this passage as a prophecy confirming the purpose he is upon, and thereby teacheth us how to understand such imprecations as these which David used against his enemies, even as so many predictions of evil things to come upon his enemies, as the type; and upon the enemies of Jesus Christ (of whom David was a type) as the antitype; and so such can no ways warrant our private imprecations flowing from a spirit

spirit of bitterness and ill will, given to revenge, upon whatsoever pretext; *And David saith, Let their table be a snare.*

II. When God is wroth with a people or a person, for often abusing his goodness and turning his grace into lasciviousness, he sends such a plague and judgment upon them, as makes the very means of life turn means of death and destruction unto them; so that they shall meet with a black and doleful disappointment, in getting poison instead of food, and death instead of life; *Let their table become a snare.* These means and ordinances which if rightly improved would have been a table well covered with all necessities, to have refreshed and satisfied their soul, shall become as a snare to take birds; they shall prove means of their utter ruin and overthrow.

III. The wicked and malicious enemies of God, on whom the means of grace doth not work, shall certainly and inevitably be thereby overthrown, *Let their table become a snare and a trap, &c.* many metaphors used to set forth the certainty of this black stroke upon incorrigible enemies.

IV. It is a black and doleful mark of a dreadful plague and judgment of God upon the soul, when it stumbles at the very ordinances, in the high way, which is plain, and wherein folks may walk and not wander, or err, Isa. xxxv. 8. as it is a mark of a man besoted with drink, who cannot hold his feet on the high streets but stumbleth and falleth; *Let their table become a stumbling unto them,* an occasion whereupon they should fall and break their necks.

V. As the righteous Judge may, and often doth punish one sin with another; so he will even punish his enemies, when they dream of no such thing; he may be pursuing them with his anger and indignation, when they imagine he is smiling upon them; when they think they have their asking, he may be letting out upon them his heavy wrath and indignation, and he may be paying them home for their wickedness, when they think he is reward-

ing them for their good, *Let their table be a recompence unto them,* even their table may become a recompence unto them. God may be pursuing them with his wrath, when they think he is fawning on them, and covering their table to them with all delicates.

VI. It is a dreadful judgment and plague of God, to have the understanding so blocked up, that it cannot take up the things of God, tho' they be clearly unfolded: *Let their eyes be darkened, that they cannot see.* See Deut. xxviii. 28. 29.

VII. Howbeit poor, dead and senseless creatures, may walk lightly under the spiritual plagues of God upon their spirits, as if there were no burden upon them; yet these spiritual plagues are the heaviest load that ever came upon a soul; a back-breaking burden, a soul-oppressing load, rendering the poor soul unfit for any duty, either towards God or man; it bows down their back, so as they cannot look up, and makes their loins to shake: *Bow down their back always.*

VIII. Where-ever this spiritual plague of hardness of heart and blindness cometh, it is hard to get it shaken off, let men think it never so easy to be done; and therefore says he, *Bow down their back always.*

VERSE 11. *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

IN this second part of the chapter he answereth another objection, the clearing whereof would serve not a little to illustrate this business better. The objection which he hath hitherto been clearing, was touching their universal apostacy, and so concerned mainly particular persons to wit, Whether the Jews were so rejected, as every particular person was out of all hope of mercy? This objection looketh more unto the body of that people as a
visible

visible professing church; and it may thus be taken up. Hath the Lord finally cast off the people and church of the Jews, and put them out of doors, so as they shall never enter again, and be accounted the spouse of Christ? Unto this he answereth at length, and sheweth by many arguments unto ver. 33. that God had a mind to enchurch them again, and that their case was not desperate and irrecoverable; and hereby he would now in the case of this dispute, cheer up the spirits of his countrymen, and not leave them in sadness, but under hope, for their encouragement; and without in prosecuting of this purpose, he dealeth with the Gentiles, to be humble, and not to misken themselves, as if they were past all danger, and insult over the poor Jews. This is the sum and drift of the apostle unto ver. 33.

Having proven out of scripture that God had blinded and hardened the Jews, for the most part, and in his just judgment, had made the means of life become a stumbling-block unto them; he now takes occasion to start the next main objection; *I say then*, the same pre-occupation which he used ver. 1. *Have they stumbled that they should fall?* that is, Hath God in his righteous judgment, so appointed and ordered that they should stumble, to the end they might fall and never rise again, nor recover themselves? Was it God's design to overthrow and destroy them utterly, when he made their table a stumbling block unto them? He answereth, *God forbid*: his usual way of rejecting absurdities. The case of the Jews is not desperate and irrecoverable, none must think so; and why so? he giveth one reason in this ver. 11. in these words; *but rather thro' their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them unto jealousy*. That is, There will a time come, wherein they shall be restored; for they shall be provoked to jealousy, and so shall return unto their old husband, from whom they have played the whore; and how will that be? Even by the means of

the taking in of the Gentiles into their place; and so the Lord's end and design in making the Jews table become a snare unto them, and a stumbling-block, was, that thereby the Gentiles might be taken in into their room, and thereby move the Jews to jealousy, (according to that passage which he cited before out of Deut. xxxii. 21.) by making them desirous of recovering their state, when they see such as they do not love to be inferior unto, taken into their place.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As ministers ought to be such as are able to stop the mouth of gainsayers, Tit. i. 9. and should labour to clear truths fully, by obviating what might be objected; so they should not propose needless and unedifying questions and objections, the answering whereof will not profit, but tend to engender strife and contention, all which the servants of the Lord should shun, Tit. iii. 9. but only such as are necessary to be cleared for edification, and the further explication of the point in hand, as these are here which the apostle meddleth with; for by answering this objection, he cleareth, that the rejection of the Jews was not final, nor their case irrecoverable; a necessary point to be known; *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall?*

II. Ministers should so speak of God's justice and judgment against an ungodly nation, or graceless unbelievers, as no door of hope or comfort, which God alloweth to be kept open, to his own among them, or to the whole body of the land be closed; they should rightly divide the word, giving every one their own due, 2 Tim. ii. 15. and so speak of his judgments as they may not shut out the mercies, which he hath a purpose to shew in due time. Therefore the apostle, in end, for the comfort of the godly among them, and keeping them all up in hope, sheweth that their rejection is not final, but their case is remediable; *I say then, Have they stumbled*

stumbled that they should fall? God forbid.

III. People are oft ready to pass the worst construction upon the Lord's dispensations to a land, and conclude their case irremediable, when God is inflicting sad and sore judgments, and to account their case desperate, when God's hand is stretched out against them; *Have they stumbled that they should fall?* The objectors thought, because God, in his wrath and just displeasure, was pursuing them with spiritual plagues, that therefore the case of that land was desperate and gone for ever.

IV. God may be stretching out his hand against a land, with very sharp and sore rods, and pursuing many among them with spiritual plagues; and this dispensation of his, may continue long, and yet, ere all be done, he may shew good to them, and follow them with loving kindness: for the nation of the Jews tho' now they stumbled being blinded of God in his wrath, yet were not irrecoverably cast down, or finally lost, but (as we shall hear further afterwards) will meet with mercy in the latter end; *Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid.*

V. Albeit a people being judicially deserted of God, and plagued, may run on in a course of sin and apostacy with full head, and rage and reel so, as if there was not a God in heaven; yet as the Lord for his own holy ends hath inflicted such a judicial and soul-destroying stroke, and so permiteth them, in the depth of his wisdom, to reel and stagger; so, in his wise and all-ruling providence, he is so ordering their rebellious practices and furious acts, as they prove a mean for the compassing of his own holy ends; *thro' their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles*, &c. the Jews were raging at Christ, and like as many mad-men, were rejecting the Messiah; and yet God made this turn to his own ends, and to the glory of his name, in the salvation of the Gentiles.

VI. Tho' men by their wicked pranks,

and abominable courses, in rejecting Christ, be opposing the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; yet our wise God can so dispose and order these oppositions of enemies, as to make them tend for the very promoting and advancing of these ends which they are studying to cross; and all the opposition which Christ meeteth with, will make him 'become greater in end: *Thro' their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles*, and thereby Christ's kingdom is no loser, but spreadeth further.

VII. Tho' a land, or particular persons, are ready to conclude, that God has cast them off for ever, when he is smiting and correcting them for their iniquities; yet God may be designing their good, and in the way of bringing the same about, and using the same sharp rod as a mean thereto: *Thro' their stumbling salvation is come to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy*; even in their stumbling there was a project of provoking them to jealousy, and so of recovering them.

VIII. When the Lord has a mind to do good unto a land, or a person, he can bring it about by very unlikely means; yea, even by such means as, to the carnal apprehension of men, rendereth the matter more unfeasible and improbable; for the *coming of salvation to the Gentiles* (whereby the Jews thought themselves out of all possibility of recovering) is a mean to *provoke them to jealousy*.

IX. That which makes a people look upon things as desperate, and to conclude themselves gone, and their case irrecoverable, when God's dispensations are rougher than ordinary, is, that they see not what good God is extracting out of that sad condition for them; and how God can make it tend to their advantage. A thorough sight of God's intentions in the saddest of dispensations, would keep us from desperate conclusions; for thus he answereth the objection, *Rather thro' their stumbling, salvation is come to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy*; and therefore they have

not ſtumbled that they ſhould fall, as was objected.

X. Wherever God ſets up the goſpel in life and power, there ſalvation is come; the goſpel being the only mean thereto: *Salvation is come to the Gentiles.* Tho' many think little thing of the goſpel, and be deſirous to be quit of it; yet whenever God takes it away, death comes in the ſtead of it; for it is *the power of God unto ſalvation*, Rom. i. 16.

XI. Tho' God might have ſent the goſpel both to Jews and Gentiles alike, and may ſend it to many nations at once; yet for the further puniſhment of ſuch as have had the firſt offer thereof, and have abuſed it, he will take it from them, and give it to another people; and, as it were, delay the ſending of it to ſome parts, till thoſe who have it provoke God, by their abuſe of it, to take it from them; *I thro' their ſtumbling, ſalvation is come to the Gentiles.* See Acts xiii. 46. Mar. xxi. 43.

XII. God's taking any kindneſs or favour from us, and giving it to ſuch as we eſteem far below us in worth, ſhould call aloud on us to repent of our doings, and turn home: *Salvation came to the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy.*

VERSE 12. *Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminiſhing of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more their fulneſs?*

A Second argument whereby he proveth the future converſion of the Jews is here; and in it the apoſtle obviateth another objection which might ariſe from what he ſaid laſt, and tend to the diſcouragement of the Gentiles, who, when they heard that the Jews (thro' occaſion of whole ſtumbling, and being caſt off, there was room made for them, and they were taken in,) ſhould again be brought in, will be ready to think that they ſhould be caſt out: To this the apoſtle answereth, That, on the contrary, the Gentiles

ſhall have braver days then, than ever they had; for if *their fall*, or ſtumbling, was the occaſion by which the Gentiles diſperſed up and down the world, enjoyed the riches of the goſpel; and of the knowledge of God in Chriſt, and *their diminiſhing* (to the ſame purpoſe, and explicating what is meant by *their fall*) that is, their rejecting of the Meſſias for the moſt part, ſo as there were but few behind, and that nation was worn to a thin company and a ſmall number of ſuch as embraced the goſpel, *be the riches of the Gentiles*, the ſame with *the riches of the world*; *how much more ſhall their abundance be?* that is, How much more ſhall their inbringing and fulneſs, or the converſion of the body and bulk of that nation (for it is oppoſed to their diminiſhing) tend to the enriching of the Gentile world, in the knowledge of Chriſt; and ſo the Gentiles need not fear that the converſion of the Jews ſhall any way prejudice them; but they may expect to reap advantage thereby. And hence we gather the ſecond argument thus: If the converſion of the body of the Jews ſhall tend to the riches of the world, then it ſhall be: But ſo their converſion ſhall tend to the enriching of the Gentiles; Therefore: Or, If God diminiſhed the Jews, or made them fall, to the end the Gentiles might be enriched; much more will he reſtore them, and make them to abound, for that end? But the former is true; Therefore, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Such is our ignorance of, and unacquaintedneſs with the ways of the only wiſe God, that oftentimes when he is about to do us good, and is taking a courſe to eſtabliſh us in our privileges and enjoyments, and to increaſe them upon our hand, we may think he is doing the quite contrary; our thoughts do not always agree with his: the Gentiles thought that his taking in the Jews ſhould be to their prejudice, and tend to the putting them out of their privileges, when God had

some other intentions, even thoughts of their further establishment thereby; *If the fall of them be the riches of the world, how much more their fulness?*

II. So large and inexhaustible is the fountain of goodness and free grace in the Lord, that one's partaking thereof, can be no prejudice to another; the more converts there be to drink at this well-head, they shall not fare the worse, but rather the better; *If the fall of them be the riches of the world, how much more their fulness?*

III. It is no new or uncouth thing to see a land, that sometimes has been forward in a profession, and eminent for privileges, stumble at Christ and his gospel, and make such a general defection, as that the Lord shall have but a small remnant among them, and few, yea, very few that shall cleave to him, in a day wherein multitudes stumble and fall: the Jews stumbled and fell, and were diminished; they stumbled at Christ, and such as stood were but thin sown: *The fall of them, and the diminishing of them; that is, of the Jews.*

IV. When sense and carnal reason would think that Christ was a looser, and that his kingdom was like to be overturned quite, yet then may his kingdom be coming, and his work advancing, more than ever: when the Jews, that were his only church upon earth, fell, and were diminished, he wanted not a church for all that, but his kingdom grew the more; for *the fall of them was the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles.*

V. Tho' now the people of the Jews be lying under the stroke of God's justice, and smarting for their rejecting of, and putting hands unto the Messiah, Jesus Christ; yet at length God will remember his covenant, made with their forefathers, and convert them to the gospel, which they have so long stumbled at: this is the main thing which the apostle is confirming here; and here he says, *How much more their*

fulness? which abundantly speaketh out their conversion. See Hos. ii. 19. 20. Isa. lxii. 4. 5. and liv. 7. 8.

VI. When God shall turn again the captivity of his people, it will not be one or two here and there whom God will bring in, but multitudes and great companies; yea, the body and bulk of them shall be converted to the faith, and look to him whom they have pierced: for there is mention made here of their *fulness*, and that in opposition to their *diminishing*. See Hos. i. 11. and iii. 5. Isa. x. 20. 21. 22. and xi. 16. Jer. l. 4. 5. in many of which places, and the like, the ten tribes are spoken of as well as Judah, and so seems to speak of a restoration yet to be, and which will have a fulness with it; then all the twelve tribes shall return.

VII. When these glorious days among the Jews come, that they shall become a famous church and people to the Lord, and *shall no more be termed forsaken*, Isa. lxii. 4. it shall not fare the worse with the Gentile church; the Jews incoming shall not prejudice them, but shall rather further their happiness: *How much more their fulness?* See Zech. viii. 20. 21. Micah iv. 1. 2.

VIII. The very thoughts of the good and glorious days which the Gentile church enjoyed, when their elder sister was shut to the door; may ascertain them of good days, when *she that balteth is assembled, and she that is driven out is gathered, and she that is afflicted, &c.* Micah iv. 6. 7. for then all the children of the house shall be together; therefore says the apostle, *How much more their fulness?*

IX. Whatever worldly excellency a land doth enjoy, yet are they poor miserable captives, for all that they possess in a world, so long as they want the gospel, which is the only enriching upmaking thing; *the riches of the Gentiles*; the gospel, and the means of the true knowledge of God, is here called, *the riches of the world*, the only upmaking thing.

VERSES 13. 14. *For I speak to you Gentiles, in as much as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office :*

If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

UNTIL the 16th verse, the apostle is further explicating and amplifying the two arguments he made use of last; and in these two verses he explains and clear-eth further that which he said, verses 11. and 12. as if he had said thus; You need not think it strange, that I said the conversion of the Gentiles would provoke the Jews to jealousy, for I am so clear in it, that altho' I be the apostle of the Gentiles, set apart peculiarly by the Lord, immediately, Acts xxii. 21. and ix. 15. and mediately, Gal. ii. 9. for the uncircumcision; yet I am so desirous to provoke my kinsmen to jealousy by the preaching of the gospel, that if I could gain some of them, I would account it a magnifying of my office. Now, says he, *I speak to you Gentiles*; I would have you acquainted with this, and I am the more bold to tell you this, because *I am the apostle of the Gentiles*, and so have some peculiar authority over you: And what is the business? even this, that the Jews will not be the worse of your conversion; for when I am preaching to you, I have an eye at the same time to my countrymen, to save some of them; nor will you be the worse of theirs, for if so I would not seek their salvation as I do, if I saw it were prejudicial to you, for I am an apostle especially for you; and yet you may know, that while I am preaching to you, if by any means I can gain and save some of them, under God, by my ministry, I will account it a great ornament to my office, a magnifying of it; and so the conversion of either can be prejudicial to neither.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Howbeit Paul was an apostle, equal in power and authority with the rest, be-

ing called immediately by God, Acts xxii. 21. and ix. 5. 6. &c. as the rest were by Christ, John xx. 21. having seen the Lord, 1 Cor. ix. 1. and having a large commission to Jew and Gentile, Acts xiii. as the rest had, Math. xxviii. 19. and being gifted with extraordinary gifts, no less than the rest; and having a singular and eminent power to plant churches, and to set up, under Christ, as one of the first founders, the new gospel discipline, and the laws of the kingdom of Christ, which seems to be the characteristic mark of apostles, distinguishing them from all other church-officers, as well extraordinary as ordinary; yet for the better discharge of his duty in his office, for the further good and edification of the church, he was restricted mainly to the Gentiles, and hence is called, *the apostle of the Gentiles*. This distribution of the apostles thro' the world was by voluntary agreement among themselves, Gal. ii. 9. or by the Lord's special appointment and designation, Gal. ii. 7. that thereby the whole world might more easily have reaped the benefit by their ministry. See Acts xxii. 21. Col. i. 25.

II. This special designation of the apostles work, to such a particular charge, did no way degrade them, or lessen their apostolical authority, or bring them down to the degree or order of single pastors, or ordinary officers; but notwithstanding hereof they retained their eminent authority as extraordinary officers, containing in them eminently all that belonged to the inferior officers, and so might exercise their extraordinary apostolic authority in every place they came to; for tho' Paul was set over the Gentiles, yet was he still an apostle; *an apostle of the Gentiles*.

III. The special commission that ministers have to a people or place, should both prompt them to use more freedom, boldness and authority towards such, and move those they are sent to, to regard what they deliver, and lay some weight upon it, and receive their doctrine the more

more chearfully: *I speak to you Gentiles* says he; and why? *in as much as I am an apostle of the Gentiles*: upon this ground, as he was free with them, so he would have them take his freedom and faithfulness well off his hand.

IV. All of us by nature, being under the curse of a broken covenant, are in a state of death; and however we please our condition very well, yet are we in the greatest danger of destruction and ruin imaginable, and so stand in great need to be saved: *Save some of them.*

V. The only means which God hath appointed, whereby poor undone souls are delivered from their hazardous condition, and brought out of the paths leading to death, is the preaching of the gospel; for thus the apostle was seeking to save his own countrymen: *Save some of them.* See Rom. i. 16.

VI. The Lord hath appointed a special and particular function for the preaching of the gospel, and thereby setting some, in a peculiar manner, apart, and installing them in that office and function to carry the gospel; therefore says he, *mine office*; which word in the original is taken ordinarily for such an office, which men in ecclesiastic public places have, and so is used of the apostles, Acts i. 17. 25. and other ministers, Col. iv. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 5. or of such as had a charge of the poor, Acts vi. 3. and however many look upon this office as altogether unnecessary, yet it is as necessary as life, and without it there is no expectation of life, in God's ordinary dispensation.

VII. Howbeit many take a light burden of this office; yet in itself, and when it is conscientiously discharged, it will be found to be a most painful and laborious piece of service, exercising the whole man: *Mine office*; the word *office* imports a painful and laborious work, as working in sand and clay, or as tining so fast, till the dust rise again.

VIII. Tho' the saving of poor souls,

and delivering of them out of a state of death and damnation, be the work of the right-hand of Omnipotency; yet for his own holy ends he thinks fit to use men as instruments under him therein, holding forth his mind in his word, and declaring the same in season and out of season: therefore says he, *If by any means I might save some of them*: Hence ministers are called, *workers with God*, 1 Cor. iii. 9. See 1 Tim. iv. 16.

IX. Ministers of the gospel, in the discharge of their office and duty, should, in subordination to God's glory, propose the salvation of such as they are sent unto, as their end; and should so carry themselves, in all the parts of their ministration, as may most tend to the saving and delivering of poor souls: *If by any means I might save some of them.*

X. Tho' ministers should labour mainly in that part of the vineyard which God in his providence hath sent them into; yet all that they do there should have a tendency to the good of the whole body of Christ and church universal; such a public spirit becomes all the ministers of the gospel; for tho' the apostle Paul was peculiarly set apart for the Gentiles, yet he so did his duty among them, as he had an eye always unto others, even to the Jews: *If by any means I might provoke them to emulation.*

XI. Ministers should so walk in every piece of their ministerial calling, as may be gaining and convincing, even to the most wicked profane wretch, and such as wickedly oppose the truth; and they should so handle the truth as may most prevail with such, and not give over the matter as desperate: there was no way to gain the Jews, but to provoke them to emulation; and therefore Paul so preached to the Gentiles, and did his duty in the ministry among them, as might best provoke them thus: *If by any means I might provoke them to emulation.*

XII. The best way whereby we can re-

tify

tify our love and respect to any whom we carry affection unto, is to seek to gain them in to Christ; and the stronger our affection be, the more should it stir us up to the use of means for this; and therefore says he, *If by any means I might provoke to emulation them which are my flesh.*

XIII. As the office of the ministry is creditable and honourable in itself; Heb. v. 4. so a faithful and honest-hearted servant of God will account it the greatest piece of honour he can meet with in the discharge of his duty. *He that has gained souls to God; that is his crown and joy.* Phil. iv. 1. 1 Thess. ii. 19. 20. *I magnify mine office, if I may save some of them.*

VERSE 15. *For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world; what shall the receiving them be, but life from the dead?*

IN this verse the apostle doth further explain and illustrate that argument set down, verse 12. and useth other expressions to the same purpose; *If the casting away of them*, that is, *If the casting away of the Jews, and casting them out of the church, be the reconciling of the world*, that is, be the occasion whereby the gospel should be preached to the Gentile world, that thereby they might be reconciled unto God, *what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?* Will there not be joyful days thro' the world, and among the Gentiles, when they shall be received into favour again? will it not be like the resurrection from the dead, when Jew and Gentile shall both enjoy the same felicity and happiness? Seeing out of the dead state of the Jews, when cast without doors, God brought life to the Gentiles, will he not much more do so out of their enlivened estate? will it not then be to the Gentiles as the resurrection from the dead?

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Let a church or people be never so

much privileged, and favoured of God as his peculiar people; yet all that will not save them from shame and loss, if they rebel against the Lord, and abuse his goodness; for the Jews are said to be cast away; the word imports a casting away with contempt: *If the casting away of them, &c.*

II. By reason of the fall of Adam all mankind are in a state of enmity with God, they living like rebels without God in a world, refusing subjection unto his laws, Rom. v. 10. Col. i. 21. and God carrying himself as a provoked enemy to them, and so need to be reconciled and made one again; there is a woful outcast and discord betwixt God and man, therefore there is mention here made of *the reconciling of the world.* See Eph. v. 2.

III. The way how this enmity shall be taken away, and God and man made good friends again, is only held forth in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is therefore called *the word of reconciliation*, 2 Cor. v. 19. the only scope thereof being to bring rebels in to Christ, who is the peacemaker, and so to enjoy a perfect peace with God; for it was upon the account of the gospel's coming unto the Gentile world, when the Jews rejected the same, that it is said, *The casting away of the Jews was the reconciling of the world.*

IV. Tho' now the Jews be forsaken, afflicted with tempests, and not comforted, and driven out of the church and presence of God; yet at length God will take them into his favour again, and bring them within the pale of the church, and so *assemble her that hatheth*, Micah iv. 6. 7. 8.; therefore there is word of receiving them again, *What shall the receiving of them be?*

V. Though now where-ever the gospel cometh in power and life, there are fruits following it, and souls brought to life thereby, and so great ground of joy and gladness upon that account; yet this joy will not be so full in the church, nor the fruits of the gospel so universal, as it shall be when the Jews are brought home; when the

the eldest son, that has played the prodigal long, shall be saved, then there shall be great joy and salvation thro' the whole church and family of God; it shall then be to the world as a resurrection, or life from the dead; even upon the occasion of the Jews conversion the gospel shall spread farther among the Gentiles, Zech. viii. 22. 23.: *What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?* See Isa. lxvi. 18. 19. 20. xiv. 1. and ii. 2. 3. Zech. xiv. 16. &c. Micah. iv. 1. 2.

VERSE 16. *For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.*

THis verse containeth a third argument proving the future conversion of the Jewish nation, where the apostle maketh use of two similitudes, one taken from the Levitical law, touching the first-fruits, Lev. xxiii. 14. 17. by the offering whereof the whole lump was sanctified unto them; see Numb. xv. 20. The other similitude is taken from nature; *If the root be holy, so are the branches*; and this he largely insisteth upon, as being the more clear of the two, and most fitted for his purpose. The apostle's argument lieth thus; If the Jewish nation be yet in some respect holy, then they will be converted and made partakers of gospel-privileges: But so it is, that the Jewish nation is in some respect holy; Therefore, &c. The proposition the apostle passeth as being clear without controversy; The assumption he confirmeth by a clear and undoubted axiom, thus; *If the first-fruits be holy, so is the lump; and if the root be holy, so are the branches*; that is, If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the first-fruits and root be holy, so are the rest of their successors and issue holy also: But the former is uncontroverted; Therefore, &c. This verse may be also looked upon as holding forth a ground of that which the apostle said last, viz. a ground of his endeavouring their con-

version, because they were not wholly and every way cut off, but in some respect were holy, and therefore there were some hopes of their conversion by the preaching of the gospel.

Because there is some further difficulty in the words; and some difficulty running thro' this whole purpose which the apostle is upon: To save us a labour in running thro' the rest of this chapter, and that the whole purpose may be the more clear, we shall here, once for all, endeavour the clearing of the whole business, by giving some clear answers to these ten questions following.

First, When he says, *If the root be holy, so are the branches*; is not Christ here meant by the root?

I answer, Not: For, 1. the root and the first-fruits must be meant of the same persons, both of them being similitudes, brought for the same end, to clear the same point, and to make up one and the same argument; but by the first-fruits we cannot understand Christ, for he was not the first-fruits in respect of the nation of the Jews. 2. The root here meant, is such a root whose branches were cut off: but no soul who is really in Christ, or is as a branch grafted into him as a root, can be cut off. 3. Into this root the branches will be grafted in again, but there is not a being in Christ, and out of him. 4. That which is here called a *root*, is called ver. 24. *the Jews own olive*, and so it cannot be meant of Christ, who is not properly their own olive. 5. The Jews are called natural branches of this root; Were they natural branches of Christ? no, in no ways; but rather he was a branch of the same stock with them, Rom. ix. 5. 6. This root has some branches natural and some preternatural, ver. 24. which cannot agree to Christ.

Secondly, Who is then to be understood here by the root?

I answer, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were the first-fruits of the Jews, and these were

were the first-fruits of the Jews, and these were the root of this stock; not Abraham alone, for then the Ishmaelites should become branches; nor Abraham with Isaac, or else the children of Esau should become branches; but Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, all three, as so many vines making up this one root: hence we find them oftentimes mentioned all three together, when mention is made of covenant blessings, as Exod. xxxii. 13. Deut. ix. 27. 2 Kings xiii. 23. Micah vii. 20. and with all the three is the same covenant, with the same promises, made; see Gen. xv. 18. xxvi. 3. 4. and xxviii. 13. 14. and hence, verse 28. they are called, *fathers*, which were not properly spoken of one alone; so what is said to Abraham, Gen. xii. 2. 3. and xxii. 18. 19. is said to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 14. to shew us, that these made up one complete root, of which the posterity of all the three were only the natural branches.

Thirdly, How, or upon what score is it, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are thus called the root?

I answer: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not to be accounted the root, merely upon a physical or natural account, but rather upon a moral account, as covenanting, not as believing, fathers, so much as believing heads of families: Nor are they the root in respect of their personal faith and holiness, but rather in respect of a covenant made with them as the head of such families; and hence their believing issue plead the covenant made with them, as Exod xxxii. 13. Deut ix. 27. 2 Kings xiii. 23. Luke i. 72. 73.; hence they became the radical means of conveying church privileges to their issue, and for this cause are called *the root*, the covenant being made with them, and they accepting of the terms of the covenant from God, for themselves and their posterity; and so from them this covenant-interest, and privileges following thereupon, had a lineal descent, and ran down from father to son;

whileas before, tho' the same covenant of grace was in being, (it being promulgated to Adam after the fall,) yet did it not run down so lineally as in Abraham's posterity, but rather was personal; nor was it entered formally with any as head of a family, but every man taken in for himself.

Fourthly, What holiness is this that is here meant, which passeth from root to branches, from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to their posterity?

I answer: It is not to be understood of inherent holiness, and true sanctification; For, 1. this holiness is not propagated by nature; the believing parent conveyeth not his graces to his issue. 2. There are none born holy, and sanctified by nature; for by nature, we are all *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 2.; but it is to be understood of a federal holiness; a holiness flowing to a society, family, or nation, by virtue of a covenant; a holiness agreeing to a stock by God's gracious estimation, whereby they are separated to himself for special services, and admitted to special privileges; and this is propagated from father to son, as freedom in a borough floweth from father to son, and agreeth to whole nations, Deut. vii. 6. 7.; and this propagation floweth not from natural generation, but is a fruit of grace and free love; for it is of God's free grace that he covenants with any, and their seed, as he did with Abraham, and to entail the children to the privileges bestowed upon the parent.

Fifthly, But how can the Jews who are now living be accounted holy upon Abraham's account, seeing they are unchurched, and not admitted to church-privileges; and seeing they cannot be accounted holy, this day, the apostle's argument can have no weight, when he says, *If the root be holy, so are the branches?*

I answer: When the apostle says, *If the root be holy, so are the branches*, he doth not mean, that the Jews are now actually instated into that state of holiness, (I am here speaking of the body and bulk of

them, which is as yet cut off,) but only that they are holy intentionally in the decree of God, and when they shall be called in, they shall be federally holy actually, by virtue of the same covenant made with this root: and thus he clearly pointeth this forth, that when they shall be received in, and ingrafted in their own olive tree, the same holy root shall derive federal holiness to them; the root being still fresh and sappy, notwithstanding of their being long broken off it. Neither is it absurd to say, that such Jews as are not yet converted, yea, possibly, not yet born, are federally holy, and in some respect in covenant with God: God can make a covenant even with such as are not in a capacity to stipulate, as we see, Deut. xxix. 14. 15. such as were not present, but possibly unborn, were entered into covenant with God; and so the Jews, who in due time are to be converted, may be federally holy, in a seminal respect.

Sixthly, What are we to understand by these branches? Whether are we to understand thereby particular believers, considered personally, here and there, receiving the offer of the Messiah; or, is the word to be taken collectively?

I answer: We are to understand it in a collective sense; For, 1. the apostle's purpose being one in this later part of the chapter, by the branches here, which are to be grafted in, he must mean the same that fell, and were cut off, and whose fall and outcasting was the occasion of the coming of the gospel unto the Gentiles, and these were the collective body of the Jews. 2. He speaks of a body cast out for many hundreds of years; 3. and of a body which being once in, was cast out; and being cast out, may be taken in again; 4. and whose taking in will be to the Gentile world as life from the dead. And, 5. they are such as are opposed to the Gentile world, and the Gentile world to them. 6. They are such a body as are styled *Israel*,

verse 25. and *all Israel*, verse 26. and of whom there is an *all*, verse 32.

Seventhly, Must we take the Gentiles also collectively?

I answer: Of necessity we must, seeing 1. the one party opposed is taken collectively, as we have shewn, the other must be so taken likewise. 2. They are called *the world*, verse 15. 3. The issue proveth it, seeing now we see nations taken in, and whole bodies of people. 4. We hear also of *the fulness of the Gentiles*, verse 15.

Eighthly, What is it to be ingrafted? or, how are either Jews or Gentiles said to be ingrafted?

I answer, 1. The ingrafting is the obtaining of an actual interest and state in the visible church; whence floweth an actual fruition of church privileges. 2. Whatever way it can be made out, or made to appear, that the Jews were cast off, the same way are we Gentiles grafted in, and the Jews shall be again grafted in; for the Gentiles come in amongst them, or instead of them, verse 17. that is, in the room where they were: and they will be again grafted in, that is, in their old place again.

Ninthly, Then it would seem that the apostle meaneth, all amongst here, the visible church, and the ingrafting and casting out, should be in and out of the visible church, and not the invisible, tho' many particulars in the text seem to point out an invisible church; as, 1. verse 15. the ingrafting is called *reconciliation*. 2. It is said to be by *faith*; and, 3. the outcasting by *unbelief*, verse 20. and *hardening* or *blinding*, verse 25. 4. This ingrafting is said to be an act of God's sole *power*, verse 23. 5. The effect of it is *salvation*, verses 26. 27. 6. It is a *fruit of election*, verse 28. and, 7. of *God's mercy*.

I answer: He is principally here speaking of the church as visible; For, 1. the ingrafting is in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as the root. 2. The ingrafting is of a collective body, as we shewed before. 3. It is

is visible, and therefore into a visible church; for (1.) it is such an ingrafting as by it the goodness of God was palpably seen. (2.) At the Jews casting out, the Gentiles were ready to boast, verses 18. 20. (3.) Their breaking off was known to Paul, and we hear nothing of his knowing this only by revelation, and no way else. (4.) It is such a church whereof the Jews were natural branches; and this could not be meant of the invisible church. (5.) It is that church out of which many who are really in, may be really out again; but it is not the invisible church that folks go out and come in to. (6.) Their condition since they were cast out, is an exclusion out of a visible church state.

As to these objections, it is answered thus: To the first, We shewed the meaning of verse 15. before, to be only this, That the gospel, which is the mean to reconciliation, came to the Gentiles. To the second, Faith is here taken for the profession of faith. To the third, This unbelief is open rejecting of the gospel. To the fourth, It will even be a work of God's power, to work them to a profession, and to bring them to a church state. To the fifth, To be in a church state, is to be in a fair way to salvation, being to partake of saving ordinances; and hence it will come to pass, that many of them shall be saved in effect. To the sixth, They are elected to a visible church state, Deut. vii. 7. 8. To the last, The privilege of a church state is indeed a great mercy. But all these particulars shall be further cleared as we go through.

Tenthly, There seemeth to be a parallel here between the Jews and the Gentiles, as to their church state, wherein doth that consist?

I answer: In that, 1. As the Jews were in the stock, branch and twig, old and young, IIa. xlii. 3. and xviii. 5. so are the Gentiles: 2. As the Jews were broken off, father and son, so are the Gentiles ingrafted. 3. As the better part of the Jews

did abide still into the olive, so are the Gentiles grafted in with them. 4. As the Jews shall again be grafted in, old and young, so are we now.

Having thus briefly given some clearness unto these doubts, we shall observe a few things, and go on.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. In explaining points of truth, we may make use of metaphors and similitudes, providing they be plain, obvious, and not too far strained; such as the apostle doth here make use of, when he says, *As the first-fruits are holy, so is the lump*, &c.

II. Howbeit many a godly and gracious parent may have unholy, profane, and graceless children, void of sanctification and inward holiness; yet the issue, branches, and children of such as are externally and outwardly in covenant with God, are with them in covenant also; he taking into covenant father and son, root and branch, Gen. xvii. 12. Deut. vii. 8. and x. 15. Amos iii. 2.: *If the first-fruits be holy, so is the lump: and if the root be holy, so are the branches*. See Acts ii. 39.

III. Howbeit grace and true inward holiness be rare, yet all the members of the visible church are holy to God, as singularly separated and set apart for God and his use, Deut. vii. 6. 7. and x. 15. having his ordinances set up among them; *If the root be holy, so are the branches*: Thus holiness is attributed to all who are externally in covenant, and members of the visible church, be they young or old.

IV. Whatever privileges children are advanced to, and made partakers of, it is in and thro' their parents, by virtue of the covenant made with fathers and children; and so they stand not on their own bottom: *If the root be holy, so are the branches*. Children may claim church privileges upon the account of their parents, and reason themselves in covenant by virtue of their parents, all being one stock, partaking of the same honours;

for to reason from parents to children, seems to have been a known maxim, and uncontroverted, when the apostle said, *If the root be holy, so are the branches.*

V. However many, yea, the whole bulk and body of the branches of the Jewish nation, be cut off, and have been withering, as being without sap these many hundreds of years; yet there is freshness and sap in the root: the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is recent and fresh before the Lord, and is not buried and forgotten quite: *The root is holy.*

VI. Tho' a people may cut themselves off by open and avowed breach of covenant, and so may banish themselves and many of their posterity from the rich and excellent blessings of the covenant; yet God at length may change his dispensations to that people, renew his old covenant after many years, and raise it up again, tho' buried and forgotten: the Jews had outed themselves and their posterity these many hundred years, and yet that same covenant will God renew, in end, with that people: *If the root be holy, so are the branches.* The sap of that covenant shall yet be communicated unto them, and by virtue thereof shall they grow up and bud into a church to God.

VII. The freshness and liveliness of this root and covenant, which God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, may ascertain us of the conversion of the Jews, and persuade us that they shall yet revive; and when they shall be brought home, they shall be admitted to all church privileges upon the old score, even upon the account of the old covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; For *if the root be holy, so are the branches*: This is his argument whereby he proveth, that the Jews shall be converted, because the root is yet holy, and by virtue thereof they shall become holy, and are at present radically and intentionally holy.

VERSES 17. 18. *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-*

tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

BEfore the apostle proceed to any more arguments, proving the future conversion of the Jews, he speaketh a word of caution unto the Gentiles, advising them not to insult over the Jews, or wax proud because of their enjoyments; and this purpose he prosecuteth unto verse 23.

In these two verses the caution is set down, and some arguments enforcing it. The caution is, verse 18. *Boast not against the branches*; tho' thou now be *grafted in amongst them*, or *with them*, or in room of them, and as they of old, so thou now *partakest of the root, and of the fatness of the olive-tree*; that is, Tho' thou hast gotten their place, and art admitted to partake of the same privileges, and external enjoyments and ordinances, by virtue of the covenant made with Abraham, which they enjoyed, and so art living as living members in a church-state, sucking the juice and sap of external covenant blessings, privileges and ordinances, from the olive root and tree; yet miscarry not yourselves, be not proud of that, but carry yourselves humbly, neither insult over these branches that are now broken off: And the reason is, 1. Because they are not all cut off, there are some of the branches here and there left uncut off, for only *some of them are cut off*. 2. Thou wast but a *wild olive-tree* by nature, having no natural affinity with this stock, and if God's free grace had not made a change on thee, thou hadst not been grafted in yet; speaking of the Gentiles here, where he calleth them a *wild olive*; he understands the first of the Gentiles, who were taken in and their issue, and not their issue alone, for the sprigs growing out of these branches which were inoculated, do naturally partake of the

the ſap of the tree. 3. *Thou wert graffed in amongſt them*; theſe who were left were as highly privileged as thou, and thou but partakeſt of the ſame ſap with them who are left. And, 4. *If thou boaſt, thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee*; that is, Thy inſulting over the old branches reflects upon Abraham the root, and it is but folly for thee to inſult over him, ſeeing he beareth thee, and thou beareſt not him; all the external privileges which thou art advanced to, thou haſt them in and thro' Abraham, theroot and the foreman in the covenant.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' ſuch as are perſonally and inwardly in covenant with God, and branches in Chriſt, thro' a true and lively faith, ſhall never be broken off, Jer. xxxi. 33. 34. &c. Iſa. liv. 13. John vi. 45. Jer. xxxii. 40. where it is called an everlaſting covenant: God holding his hand ſtill about theſe, Iſa. liv. 10. and lix. 21.; yet ſuch as are only viſible and externally by profeſſion, in covenant, and thereby only in Chriſt, as ſeeming branches, may be cut off: for ſo was it here; ſome of the Jews were cut off; *And if ſome of the branches be broken off.*

II. Folks ſeeming profeſſion and fair outside and pretences, will not ſave them from a ſad unchurching ſtroke, when God is greatly provoked to anger, by their not walking answerable to their profeſſion; for here *ſome branches*, tho' branches, are broken off.

III. However the Lord bring ſad and ſore judgments upon a land, in general, and unchurch, or take the goſpel and ordinances from the whole land, where the ſame goſpel has been abuſed, and contemned; yet will he have reſpect unto ſuch as are mourning for the iniquities of the land, and are imbracing the offers of a Mediator, and cloſing with God in Chriſt: the covenant relation betwixt God and them ſhall ſtand; and tho' others ſhall be cut off from the ſtock they ſeemed to be graſſed into,

yet their intereſt ſhall remain ſure, and they ſhall not be cut off; for here there was but *ſome branches*, that were broken off; the believing branches ſtood and enjoyed their privileges.

IV. Before Chriſt came, the body of the Gentiles were living in a wild condition, being without the bounds of the church, without the hedge; having no communion with the church of God, which was then only among the Jews, Deut. xxxii. 8. Pſal. lxxvi. 1. 2. and ſo without God's fatherly care and protection, Iſa. iv. 5. 6. and xxxi. 4. 5. his culture, Iſa. v. 2. 3. the enjoyment of the ordinary means of ſalvation, Pſal. cxlvii. 19. the offers of Chriſt, Eph. ii. 12. and of the covenants of promiſe, *ibid*, and the privileges thereof, and ſo out of all hope of mercy, and poſſibility, in God's ordinary way of ſalvation; hence they are called *the wild olive*: The Jews then being the only church of God, and the Gentiles wholly without; except ſome few proſelites who were taken in.

V. How deſperate like ſoever a people's caſe may ſeem to be, yet when the time of love cometh, wherein he will ſhew mercy, their former ſad and ſinful condition will not hinder him to manifeſt his loving kindneſs, and mercies; for albeit the Gentiles being for ſo many ages kept out of the church, and living in a wild condition, without God, ſeemed to be altogether in a helpleſs condition; yet God in due time did graſſ them in, according to his manifold promiſes, Iſa. ii. 2. 3. Pſal. xxii. 27. Iſa. lx. 1. 2. 3. 4. 11. Pſal. ii. 8. 9. and lxxii. 7. 8. 9. 10. Iſa. xi. 10. xlix. 2. 2. and liv. 3. *Thou being a wild olive tree art graſſed in.*

VI. Howbeit there was a long ſtanding enmity betwixt Jew and Gentile, before Chriſt came, ſo that the one was within the church of God, and worſhiped him according to his own appointment; the other, except ſome few proſelites, was without the church, and without all right way.

of worshipping God, and despised by the other, Ephes. ii. 11.; yet now, since Christ is come, this enmity is removed, the very ground of it being taken away by his death, viz. the ceremonial law, Ephes. ii. 14. 15. and Jews (so many of them as stood uncut off thro' misbelief) and Gentiles are united together in one covenant, under one head and husband, making up one church to Christ; hence it is said that the Gentiles are *grafted in among them*, or with them, who remained uncut off. See Eph. ii. 15.

VII. Tho' the covenant which God made with Abraham had some temporal promises in it, as the promise of the land of Canaan, &c. Gen. xvii. 8. which were only additional, added *ex superabundanti*, the like whereof are also added in the New Testament, Mat. vi. 33. 1 Tim. iv. 8. and in the covenant which was made with David, Psal. lxxxix. 2 Sam. vii. and Canaan was held forth as a type of heaven, the blessings of that land being promised to all believers, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. 26. 30. 31. Jer. xxxi. 31. compared with verses 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. Heb. xiii. 5. 6.: And tho' this covenant was administered under types and sacrifices, a way of administration suitable for that age of the church, and so was but accidental as to the substance of the covenant; yet that covenant made with Abraham was the same for substance, with that which is now made with the church under the gospel, having the same Mediator, Heb. xiii. 8. 1 Cor. x. 1. to 7. John viii. 56. in whom it was made, Gal. iii. 16. 17. 18. 29. salvation then, as well as now, being by grace, Acts xv. 11. and by faith, Rom. iv. 3. 4. 5. Acts x. 43. Heb. xi. 1. 2. 3. 4. 13. &c. without works, Rom. iv. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. and so one way of justification, Rom. iv. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Gen. xv. 6. Psal. xxxii. 1. 2. for it is the same root and the same olive which Jew and Gentile stand on; and the Gentiles now under the gospel are grafted into that same stock, and taken into that same covenant, which was made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the Gen-

tiles are *grafted in with them*, *partaking of the same root*, and *olive with them*.

VIII. This covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, being a covenant of grace, is full, sappy and rich, having promises of grace, reconciliation, pardon, adoption and sanctification here, see Jer. xxxi. 31. and Jer. xxxii. 40. and of glory hereafter, to all such as believe, and so follow the steps of their father Abraham, and hence it is called, a covenant of promise, Eph. ii. 12. and we hear of the blessings of Abraham, Gal. iii. 14. blessings promised to him and his believing seed, Gen. xxii. 18. and having many external privileges, mercies and church perogatives, as the ordinances of life, and the seals of this covenant, and the like, which are bestowed on such as are external members, and profess themselves believing covenanters: this olive has fatness; *and partake of the root and fatness of the olive*.

IX. Those church privileges which flow from the covenant, flow forth no less abundantly to the Gentiles, than they did to the Jews, and so flow forth to father and children; for there is no difference of ingrafting, but the Gentiles are *ingrafted with the Jews*, *and partake of the fat of the olive with them*, or instead of these, who were broken off; the river of fatness is not dried up to the Gentiles, nor is the root sending less sap to them, than it did to the Jews before, but rather more, see it is stiled a *better covenant*, in some respects, Heb. vii. 22. and viii. 7. 10 13. and so if infants then being in covenant had right to circumcision, Gen. xvii. 12. and to the means of salvation, so far as they were capable, Gen. xviii. 19. Deut. vi. 6. 7. why not infants now? Children must not be the worse for the coming of a better covenant.

X. It is no easy matter to walk under the receipts of mercy and favours from God, and not wax proud and insolent: Corruption makes the weed of pride bud most after the sweetest May-shower; when God's favours should humble us, they oft work

work the contrary way; for the Gentiles having received a rare favour, of being grafted in, are now ready to misken themselves, to boast and insult over the Jews; *Boast not thyself against the branches.*

XI. Tho' God in his just judgment be removing favours from others, and in mercy be bestowing them on us, in a rich measure; we should not the more of that insult over such as are afflicted of the Lord, seeing mercy should be shown to such; but pity and commiserate the case and condition of such, and help forward their good all we can: he will not have the converted Gentiles insulting over the poor afflicted outcast Jews; *Boast not thyself against the branches.*

XII. Right thoughts of our former condition, while we were in nature, and of our unworthiness of mercy, will help to keep us low and humble under our present enjoyments, Ezek. xx. 43. and also provoke us to have compassion upon, and pity others who are in the condition which we were once into, Tit. iii. 2: 3. and for this cause the apostle, that he may keep the Gentiles humble, and from insulting over the outcast Jews, mindeth them of what they once were; and sayeth, *Thou being a wild olive wert grafted in, and thence infereth, Boast not thyself, &c.*

XIII. Thoughts of God's rare and undeserved mercies towards us, should serve as a bridle to bear down corruption and pride in us. Therefore, to keep the Gentiles from boasting against the branches, he tells them, that they are now grafted in, and partaking of the root and of the fatness of the olive.

XIV. The insulting over the off-cast Jews, as if they were never to be taken in again, is a reflecting on the root Abraham, and the covenant made with him; as tho' it were not able to send up sap to make those rotten and blasted branches to bud again; *Boast not against the branches, for thou bearest not the root, but the root thee;* That is, all the good thou hast, thou hast

it from the root; and since the root was able to send life and sap to thee who were no branches thereof, why may it not also send sap to such as are now withered?

XV. Unthankfulness or forgetfulness of the benefits which we have received, as it is a great sin in itself, so it ushereth in other sins, and makes a soul not only misken its benefactors, but even to offer indignities to them, and also to wax insolent and proud, and insult over others; so was it here intimated; *Boast not against the branches: or if thou do, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee:* If thou boast against the branches, thou wilt also reflect upon thy benefactors; and the root of all will be, thy forgetting that the root beareth thee; for if thou calledst this to mind, it would help all.

XVI. Serious minding of our own natural condition, and of our way of standing in the condition we are in, would help us to keep calm; and that which puffeth us up, is, we forget the basis we stand upon; *If thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee:*

VERSES 19. 20. *Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.*

Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.

FOR further clearing of this, he proposeth an objection, which he saw the insulting Gentiles would have made use of, and answereth it; and withal presseth them to humility, from a new argument. He had said, ver 12. that *the fall of them was the riches of the world;* and ver. 15. that *the casting away of them was the reconciling of the world;* and from this he saw the Gentiles would be ready to gather some ground to encourage them to boast; and so he says, *Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in;* that is, The Jews were cast out of doors

doors on purpose, that we who were Gentiles should be taken in, in their room; and therefore we have cause to think better of ourselves, and more meanly of these. To this he answereth, 1. *Well*, I grant they are cast off, and you are come in their place. But 2. *Because of unbelief they were broken off*. The true cause which provoked God to unchurch them, was, their own guilt and sin, in rejecting openly the covenant and the offer of life and salvation in the Messiah; as we see, Acts xiii. 46. 47. Next he presseth them to humility, saying; *Be not high-minded, but fear*; that is, Forget not yourself and your standing; fear and tremble and wax humble: and his reason is; *You stand by faith*, your standing depends upon no worth in yourself, but upon your avowing of the covenant, and adhering to the profession thereof; the not doing whereof, was the cause why the Jews were cast off; and of such a faith and not of a justifying faith he is speaking: for, 1. It is such a faith as may be quite lost; but justifying faith can never be totally lost. 2. Such a faith as justifies even before men, unto the privileges of the church and covenant. 3. Which justifieth root and branches into the covenant privileges. 4. A faith common to the whole body of the Gentile world.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. However the servants of God should faithfully discharge their duty, and declare the privileges of a covenant to be due to such as God hath allowed them unto; yet they should so guard as none might have ground to insult and wax too wanton; for this end, doth the apostle propose this objection, to be answered; *Thou wilt say then, &c.*

II. As it is in all other sins, so it is in pride, folks have ill will to quit with it; so desirable is sin unto them, that what should be means and motives to move them to cast it away, proves a mean to keep it still; and what should prove an argument to keep

them humble, from that they can draw encouragement to foster them in their pride. God's taking of them into the visible church, when in his wrath he had cut off others, should have made them to have kept themselves calm, and yet we see here, it rather puffeth them up, so as they are ready to say, *The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in*.

III. Carnal professors do always look on their enjoyments and privileges, as somehow merited, and not as freely and undeservedly bestowed; *Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in*. As if they had said, The Lord saw some worth in us, therefore he unchurched them, and took us into their room.

IV. In disputes concerning the truth, we should not stick at every thing, but freely yield all which may be granted; and this will be a short way to come to clearness, as the apostle doth here, saying, *Well*, granting the thing which they had said to be in part true, viz. so far as upon the occasion of their rejecting of the gospel, salvation came to the Gentiles.

V. Tho' God is free to take his gospel away, when, and from whom, he pleaseth; yet ordinarily he takes not the gospel, and the ordinances thereof, from a people or a nation where, and among whom, he has once settled them, until he be provoked thereto, by their wicked and gross carriage: *Because of unbelief they were broken off*.

VI. One main cause which provoketh God to unchurch a people, and to take the gospel and the ordinances of life from them, is, When not only they do not savingly make use thereof, by making in to Jesus Christ thro' faith, and living in him; but also they do openly declare their renouncing of Christ, and of life thro' him, thro' open enmity against the very ordinances of life: *Because of unbelief they were broken off*.

VII. As a true and saving faith in Christ, doth unite a soul to Christ, and implant them

them in his inviſible and myſtical body, as living members thereof; ſo an open profeſſion of the true religion, of faith in Jeſus, and of the expectation of ſalvation only thro' him, with a profeſſion of obedience and ſubjection unto his laws and commandments, makes a perſon or a people members of Chriſt's viſible body, and of his church and kingdom: *Thou ſtandeſt by faith.*

VIII. Pride and haughtineſs of ſpirit is altogether unbefeeing any who profeſs faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and yet the greater their profeſſion be, if there be not a true and lively faith at the root, the greater will the pride of their heart be; and therefore the apoſtle warneth the Gentiles not to be high-minded: *Be not high-minded.*

IX. That which maketh many a carnal profeſſor too conceited, and thro' pride of heart to miſken themſelves, is, their forgetting the ground they ſtand upon; and right and ſerious thoughts of this, that they ſtand upon no baſis or foundation of their own, but by faith, would make them have low thoughts of themſelves; *Thou ſtandeſt by faith,* ſays he, and then infereth, *be not high-minded.*

X. It becometh all who profeſs the name of Jeſus, to be walking both ſoberly and in fear, knowing and conſidering what hazard they are ſtill in, what temptations they are liable unto, and what weakneſs and inability is in them to withſtand; they ſhould be ſtill upon their watch-tower, and guarding againſt the aſſaults of the devil: *Be not high-minded, but fear.*

XI. The more humble a poor ſoul be, in the ſenſe of its own baſeneſs, unworthineſs and weakneſs, the more warry and circumſpect will that ſoul be in its walk; and where pride and ſelf-conceit aboundeth, it caſts a ſoul looſe and open to its enemies; *Be not high-minded, but fear,* goes beſt together.

VERSE 21. *For if God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not thee.*

THIS verſe containeth another argument by which he preſſeth them to humility and watchfulneſs, and whereby he inforceth upon them the former exhortation, not to be high minded, but to fear. The argument lieth thus, If thou haſt no ground to plead exemption from the judgments of God; then haſt thou cauſe not to be high-minded, but to fear: but ſo it is thou haſt no ground to expect that God will paſs thee by, and this he cleareth thus, If he ſpared not the Jews, thou haſt no cauſe to think he will ſpare thee; and the ground of this is, becauſe the Jews were natural branches, they had, to ſpeak ſo, a kindly right, as kindly tenants, to the covenant, and to the privileges thereof, as being the natural iſſue of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, when as the Gentiles were wild.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. So righteous and juſt is God, that when he is provoked to anger by the evil carriage of a people, or viſible church, he will not ſpare, but cut them off, were they never ſo privileged beyond others, and had they never ſo many grounds whereupon to expect a perpetuity of their ſtanding: The Jews, tho' natural branches, lineally deſcended of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, and firſt in covenant, and this covenant-intereſt runing down thro' many generations, yet they are not ſpared: *If he ſpared not the natural branches.*

II. God's cutting off and unchurching the people of the Jews, is a ſtanding document to all churches, in all ages, and may be a ground of perſuaſion unto them, that were they never ſo privileged beyond others, if they prove contumacious and unworthy, they ſhall be cut off: *If he ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not thee.*

III. The continual hazard that a church or people is in, of being unchurch'd and cut off from their church-privileges by God, becauſe of their walking unworthy of, and concerning the light of the goſpel,

should make the most eminent church for enjoyments and profession to walk lowly and in fear; *Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.*

IV. A people or churches walking humbly and in fear, considering always God's justice, and their own frailty and sinfulness, is a notable mean to keep them from being cut off, and to make them stand; it is a notable mean to prevent their unchurching; for this lieth in the bosom of the argument, he would have them walking in fear, knowing that otherwise God will not spare them, if once they turn careless, thro' pride and conceitedness: *Be not high-minded, but fear,---lest he also spare not thee.*

VERSE 22. *Behold therefore the goodness, and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

HE closeth this exhortation here, by summing up some arguments to enforce it. In this verse we find four strong motives, to a humble walking in fear. 1. *Behold the severity of God towards them that fell*; consider seriously how God dealt in strict justice with these who fell, how he examined them very narrowly, and took notice of every particular, like a strict judge, examining the matter thoroughly, and cutting it in pieces, for the more narrow examination and searching; and let this keep thee in a trembling posture. 2. Consider his goodness and bounty to you; ready and prompt he was to shew kindness to thee, out of love and affection; and let this work upon thy heart, humility and fear. 3. Consider how the tack which thou hast of his goodness and kindness is not absolute, but conditional; *If thou abide in his goodness*; that is, If thou continue in faith, whereby his goodness may be continued with thee. 4. Consider, how if

thou abide not in faith, but corrupt thy ways, and reject the gospel, thou shalt be cut off, God will not spare thee.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is no easy matter to keep a people, honoured with privileges and external enjoyments, humble and watchful; but presently they grow proud and secure, and therefore there is need of arguments upon the back of arguments to alarm them, and to put them to their duty: for this cause the apostle useth many arguments which he would not have needed to do, if one word would have been sufficient.

II. Tho' many look upon God as altogether mercy and goodness, and thereby encourage themselves in evil; yet he being the righteous Judge of the world, is just and righteous also, and hath wrath to pour out upon the wicked and rebellious; he has severity; *Behold the severity of God.*

III. Tho' God be most merciful and slow to wrath, ready to pass by many provocations, and to bear with sinners a long time; yet when all that doth not prevail, but still he is provoked to anger by people's contemptuous carriage, he will at length enter into judgment; and when he is set down upon the throne of justice, he will examine their ways to the least, and as it were anatomize, or cut up, every piece of their deportment, that inside and outside both may be seen; and as nothing will be got hid from his all-seeing eye, so will he execute judgment and justice accordingly: *Behold the severity of God*; this word rendered *severity*, is a word signifying cutting as an anatomizer carefully cutteth every small litch and joint, and as a strict judge narrowly searcheth out things, and pondereth and seriously considereth every circumstance.

IV. When God thus entereth into judgment with a people, and dealeth with them according to strict justice, it is when they become incorrigible and desperately wicked,

and will take no warning, but wilfully follow the devices of their own heart: *Behold the severity of God towards them that fell*; that is, such as wilfully departed from God, and fell away from their constancy and profession.

V. It is the duty of Christians to be looking to the dispensations of God even towards others, and reading his mind upon his sharp and fore judgments upon other neighbours about them: *Behold the severity of God*.

VI. A serious and conscientious considering of God's executing justice and judgment upon sinners about us, will prove a notable mean to keep us humble, and to cause us pass the time of our sojourning here in fear; for this is the argument to keep them from being high-minded, and make them to fear: *Behold the severity of God on them that fell*.

VII. Tho' God be executing judgment, according to strict justice, upon obstinate rebels; yet all that will not so shut out his goodness, but such as he hath a mind to manifest his goodness unto, shall, notwithstanding thereof, taste of the same: *But towards thee goodness*.

VIII. God's goodness towards us, in the time when his anger and displeasure is broken forth upon others, should lay strong bonds on us to walk humbly before God; for this is the argument by which he presseth these to humility, *Behold the goodness of God---to thee*: As his goodness should then be most remarkable, so should the sense of it have the deeper impression upon us.

IX. As we should always remember that we are but tenants at will, and have not an absolute and eternal tack of his goodness; so the thoughts of this should keep us humble and mindful of our duty; therefore he addeth, as another motive, *If thou continue in his goodness*.

X. When a people whom God hath honoured greatly with privileges, and made partakers thereof when he hath removed

them from others, walk not worthy of them, nor do those duties which are called for at their hands; then will God be provoked to dry up the springs of his goodness, and draw back his hand; *If thou continue in his goodness: otherways thou also shalt be cut off*.

XI. Serious thoughts of the hazard which we are in of losing our privileges, will make us keep a low sail, and walk humbly under our enjoyments; for this is another motive; *Otherways thou also shalt be cut off*.

VERSE 23. *And they also, if they bide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.*

THE apostle having thus pressed humility upon the believing Gentiles, he returns to speak of the conversion of the Jews; and in this verse he layeth down a fourth argument proving the same, which he further explaineth in the next verse. The argument is taken from God's power; *God is able to graft them in again*: for as improbable and unlikely like a thing it seemeth to be, to say that the Jews, who have been long cut off, shall ever be taken in again; yet there is nothing too hard for God, all things are possible with him; and because this would seem a loose argument to say, God is able to do it, therefore it shall be; because God is able to do many things, which he will never do; therefore the apostle sets down the sum and substance of the covenant, as the basis of this argument; and so it is true the argument *a posse ad esse*, or from God's power and ability, to prove that a thing shall be, is not strongly conclusive; but where his faithfulness is engaged, and his promise or covenant layeth the ground, then such an argument as this may be well built upon it: Therefore he says; *And they also, if they bide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in again*; that is, If once they shall repent, and return from their faithlessness and unbelief, then

they shall be grafted in again, It was because of their unbelief, they were cut off, and when this sin of theirs shall be at an end, then shall they be grafted in; for this is the nature of the covenant, that they shall be owned as his people, so long as they walk as his people; and when they repent, he will remember their iniquities no more; and this ground being laid down, then God's almighty power comes fitly in to loose all knots. Neither doth this *if*, or supposition, make the matter uncertain, but hereby the Lord's way of doing good to his people is held forth: This is his method of doing good to his people, first they must repent and turn from their wickedness, which they cannot do without his grace, and then followeth his mercy and goodness.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' people, when God is entering into judgment with them, be ready to take up hard and unsuitable thoughts of him, and of his procedure, and to account him too rigorous and severe upon them; yet if they would search their own ways more narrowly, they would find just cause why God should deal so with them: therefore to clear the ground of God's severity which he used towards the Jews, he sets their *unbelief* here, as the cause of it, saying, *And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, &c.*

II. When a people have once turned their back on God, and are running down the hill, by apostacy and defection, it is not an easy matter to recover them soon again; but so satisfied are they with their ways, and such delight take they to follow the imaginations of their own vain hearts, that it is no easy matter to get them reclaimed, nor is it ordinary to see them repent and return for a long time: for the Jews here turned their backs on God thro' unbelief, and have continued in that condition many ages; and this the apostle supposeth, when he says, *If they abide not still in unbelief, &c.*

III. When God has once begun to smite a people, and denude them of their privileges and enjoyments which they have once been favoured with, for their contempt thereof, and their unworthy walking thereunto; so long as they continue in their sins, and are not turning home by repentance, they have no ground to expect that God shall cast the whip out of his hand, and return to them with his wonted mercies and loving-kindnesses; for when he says, *if they abide not still in unbelief, they shall be grafted in*, he supposeth, that if, or as long as they, abide in unbelief, they shall not be grafted in.

IV. How long soever a people that are in covenant with God, shall be lying under the fore rod of an angry God, and how improbable soever it seem, that that people shall again be restored to their wonted dignity and privileges; yet when that people shall return to the Most High by unfeigned repentance, and avouch their owning of him as theirs, he both can and will manifest himself unto them, as in the days of old, and honour them as before: for the Jews, for as long as they have been drinking of the cup of God's anger, shall be grafted in, when ever they shall leave off their course of unbelief, and look to him whom they have pierced, by a true faith: *And they also, if they bide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in again.*

V. God's purposes and decrees, tho' they be absolute in themselves, yet should they not loose our hands from diligence in setting about the means whereby God, in his ordinary way of dispensation, brings about the execution of these decrees of his, but rather should stir us up to fervency and diligence: for tho' the apostle be here proving, that God hath indeed a purpose to graft the Jews in again, yet the means to that end are comprehended in that same purpose; and therefore he says here, *they shall be grafted in, if they bide not still in unbelief*: Not as if this *if* made the matter pendulous and uncertain, but as holding

holding forth the ordinary means and way how the decree will be executed, viz. by their believing, and this to stir up the Jews to repent and return, and others to deal with God for that spirit to them; therefore is it set down as a condition, not of the purpose, but of the execution of the purpose.

VI. It is beyond the reach of man's power to bring a people who are strangers to God into a church-state, and into subjection unto Christ, man's nature being so averse therefrom; and it is only the power of Jehovah that can effectuate this; it is a work that will even call for the arm of the Almighty: *God is able to graff them in*: The churching of the Jews again will be a work of God's right-hand, and no less will take off the prejudices of the Jews, and bring them to a submision to Christ.

VII. Men are very ready to measure God's power by their own apprehensions, and to think, that what looks improbable unto their shallow capacity and reason, is beyond the reach of the right-hand of Omnipotency: these Romans, and other Gentiles, thought it so improbable and unlikely, that a nation so universally cast off, and so justly, should ever be brought home, and therefore were ready to think it beyond God's power too; and for this cause the apostle sets down this ground, that *God is able to graff them in*:

VIII. Thoughts of God's infinite power will be comfortable and refreshing unto a people who are upon the repenting hand, and turning home to God; and faith then acting on God's almighty power, will bear up a peoples head, and make them see beyond mountains of difficulties and improbabilities; when the Jews are repenting and falling off their unbelief, then may they gather comfort and consolation from this, that *God is able to graff them in*.

VERSE 24. *For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and*

wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree?

THE former argument, taken from God's power, is here further explained. The Jews had such a prejudice at the gospel, that it seemed very improbable that ever they should be brought to welcome it; and so it seemed very unlikely that ever they should be enchurched, being now, because of their unbelief, unchurched; but here the apostle cleareth how easily it will be got done, by shewing how easily he did that which seemed more improbable, viz. he ingrafted the Gentiles, who were *aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant with promise*; they were growing in a wild stock, a stock never cultured nor grafted by God's special care; the stock on which they grew was not taken within the hedge by a covenant, and yet God took the branches of these wild stocks, and grafted them into Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which was against nature; and since God did that, much more may he make that nation, which once was growing on this good stock, and are still natural branches of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the root, tho' now withered, take life again, and draw sap from that old sappy root, and so grow up in this covenant.

OBSERVATIONS

I. All mankind now, since the fall, being naturally enemies to God, and out of his favour and friendship, are in a most wild and forlorn condition, till he take them within the compass of a covenant; for the Gentiles, before God took them in, and the Jews also, before he covenanted with them, were *an olive which was wild by nature*.

II. Howbeit many who are led with sense and carnal reason, think the condition of that people best who abound most with

with worldly wealth, tho' they be strangers to God; yet the condition of such a people who are externally in covenant with God, had they little in a world to boast of, is far better; having God and his ordinances among their hands, and the way to life eternal laid open; such are called *a good olive*: Unspeakable is the advantage that redounds to a people by a covenant, and by being his professed subjects.

III. Tho' God has, in his deep wisdom and unspeakable love and free grace, appointed an ordinary way how this covenant-relation shall pass, *viz.* from father to son; yet he has not bound up his own hands from working beside, or contrary unto, this ordinary or natural way, so as he may not, for the glory of his majesty and matchless free grace, take a people into covenant who are not lineally descended from such as were in covenant before; for he took the Gentiles, who were *cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and grafted them, contrary to nature, into a good olive-tree.*

IV. Serious and thorough consideration of the former passages of God's providence, would strengthen our faith in after-times, when we see his work meet with new difficulties, and impediments laid in the way afresh; for to persuade the Gentiles that it was easy with God to bring home the Jews, he reminds them of his wonderful work in bringing in the Gentiles; and whoever doth rightly ponder and consider the wonderful work of God, in serving the Gentiles heirs to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, will not think it impossible for him to restore the off-broken Jews again. *If thou wert cut off, &c.* says he, *how much more shall the natural branches be grafted into their own olive-tree.*

V. Altho', in respect of God's almighty power, there be not some things more easy, and some things less easy and more difficult; yet to us there are some things which appear more improbable, and God's

accomplishing of that, should fully ascertain us of his performing that which seems less difficult: therefore says he, *How much more, &c.*

VI. The relation which the off-cast Jews have yet unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the covenant made with them, may answer any difficulty which appeareth to us in their future conversion and restoration; for they are called yet *natural branches*, and the olive is called *their own olive.*

VERSE 25. *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

THE apostle, in the following verses unto verse 33. being to prove further the conversion and restoration of the Jewish nation, he cleareth the thesis a little further; and therefore in this verse he affirmeth, 1. That this blindness which is judicially befallen the nation of the Jews, the true posterity of Jacob or Israel, is not to be perpetual; as it did not fall upon all and every one of that nation, so neither is it to stay on continually; it is but to abide for a time; *Blindness in part is happened to Israel.* 2. He prefixeth a time to it, *until the Gentiles be come in*; that is, until the church of Christ shall take in the body of the Gentiles; or, until the gospel have gone thro' the Gentile nations, and there shall be a greater flocking of the Gentile nations unto the kingdom of Christ, and embrace the gospel of Christ, and so have come in to the church, then shall their hardness or blindness have an end. 3. He telleth that this business was a *mystery*, a matter which they should not quarrel at, tho' they could not well see through it; 4. and such a mystery as they would do well to be thoroughly seen in; *I would not have you ignorant of this mystery*: And, withal,

withal, 5. he bears in a check for their proud and haughty conceit they had of themselves, and of their own knowledge; as if he had said, You think you know all things pretty well, and you are puffed up with a conceit of your own knowledge, but I would have you convinced of your ignorance in this particular, for it is a mystery. And, 6. he gives them a kindly compellation of *brethren*, the more to gain upon their affections, and to make them willing to take with their ignorance in this particular, and to acquaint themselves more with the truth of it.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Reproofs will not work kindly where there is any prejudice conceived against the reprove; but they work best where the reprov'd is convinced of the real love and affection of the reprove, and that his check and reproof flows from love, and a holy earnest desire to have them savingly instructed: therefore that the check which he afterward gives them for their pride, might work the more kindly, he useth this warm compellation of *brethren* first; *Brethren, I would not have you ignorant.*

II. As knowledge is a most desirable thing in itself, being a piece of the lost image of God; so any part of this which man attaineth unto, when it is not sanctified, is ready to puff up poor souls with a vain and froathy conceit of their worth and parts, 1 Cor. viii. 1.: *Left ye should be wise in your own conceits.*

III. The serious consideration of the depths and mysteriousness of points of truth, as being beyond the reach of human reason, should lay the vain conceits, and proud speeches of haughty men, and convince them so of their blindness and ignorance, as should keep them humble and low in their own eyes; he would have them considering how this matter was a mystery, that thereby they might be kept from becoming wise in their own conceits; *I would not have you ignorant of this*

mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.

IV. Tho' there be some points of truth necessary unto salvation, which are set down in plain terms, so as every body may reach them, in some measure; yet there are other truths wraped up in obscurity, so as every ordinary capacity cannot reach them, and will be an exercise unto such as think themselves most able to dig into that mine; there are some truths called *mysteries*, as being hid: *I would not have you ignorant of this mystery.* See Mark iv. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 51. Eph. i. 9. and iii. 3. 1 Tim. iii. 9. 16.

V. Tho' there be some truths of a secret and deep nature, transcending natural capacity, and more darkly revealed and unfolded than others in the word; yet the Lord alloweth all to acquaint themselves with these mysteries, so far as God hath given ground in his word: tho' none should curiously dive into the matter further than they have a warrant, and a threed of God's word to guide them out and in; yet it is both safe and commendable to be searching even the depths, so far as we have warrant: *Brethren, I would not have you ignorant of this mystery.*

VI. The way of God's dispensations with his old people of the Jews, since they got that fatal stroke, and his way of taking them home again, now after they have been so long cast out, and the time when, and the mean how, God will shew wonders to these dead people, and make these dry bones to live, is a mystery that carnal reason cannot reach nor fathom: It is called *a mystery.*

VII. Tho' God be loth to strike or give up a people who are in covenant with him, yet were a people never so honoured of God with privileges and special favours, and had never such relation to such as are high in favour with God, when that people grow desperately wicked, and refuse all means of peace, God will draw out his rod, and whip them with sore and dreadful

dreadful judgments; *blindness happened even to Israel*, who were in covenant with God, and come of honoured Jacob.

VIII. Tho' these external rods be sad which God bringeth upon a sinful nation, as sword, famine, and pestilence; yet there are other judgments of a more spiritual nature, which speak out a more angry God, and are more dreadful and lamentable, tho' people be least sensible of them: the heavy stroke which he sent upon sinful Israel, was blindness, a judicial senselessness and stupidity of heart, and uncapableness of the means of life: *Blindness is happened to Israel.*

IX. How dreadful and raging soever the judgments be which are sent upon a land, yet the great and only wise God has a holy over-ruling hand about it, so as he not only modifies it, and measures it out by scruples and grain weights, but also measureth out the duration of it, and has prefixed a certain period thereunto, which it cannot transgress: *Blindness in part is happened to Israel.*

X. Tho' the Gentile nations were once without the pale of the church, living without God and without Christ in the world; yet now, in the days of the gospel, the church door is cast open, and all welcomed who will come in: therefore it is said, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

XI. Tho' Christ in his gospel shall meet, and doth meet daily with much opposition, yet he shall be still upon the gaining hand, and his kingdom shall be still growing and encreasing, till at length there be a fulness of the Gentile nation flocking in to it, and embracing his offers; so that his kingdom shall run thro' the world, and there shall be no considerable nation but shall accept of his offer; or, the nearer an end the world shall be, there shall be a more general flocking of the Gentile people unto Christ and his church; for there is mention made of *the fulness of the Gentiles*; *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

XII. God, in the depth of his wisdom, hath trysted the inbringing of the Jewish nation unto the gospel, with the best days of the gospel among the Gentiles; for then they will be most provoked to jealousy, and Christ's name will be most glorious: *Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

VERSES 26. 27. *And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

IN the beginning of this 26th verse he sets down the rest of the mystery, which he explained in part in the last verse. He told that blindness was the judgment which God had inflicted upon Israel, until the gospel should be at a full spring-tide among the Gentiles. But what then? then, says he, *All Israel shall be saved*; that is, The whole body of the nation of the Jews shall be brought from under the plague of blindness, under which they lay, and brought under the gospel and the saving ordinances of Christ, into a gospel covenant church-state, yea, and possibly then the saving influences of the Spirit of God shall abound more than ever, and that visible church of the converted and pardoned Jews, shall be a pure church. Now, after he has thus set down this dark and mysterious point of truth, he goes about to confirm the same out of scripture, and his first confirmation is out of Isa. lix. 20. where it is said; *And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob*; but the apostle following the Seventy, who vary a little from the original, says, *There shall come out of Zion, [for unto Zion,] the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, [for unto them that turn from ungodliness, &c.]* but the discrepancy is not very material; seeing,

seeing, 1. when the Lord shall come unto the Jews, it will be out of his Zion among the Gentiles, out of his church there: And, 2. when he is coming to enchurch them, it will be when they have repented and turned from their ungodliness; and this they cannot do, until he do it; it is his work, and his first work among them, to turn away their transgression, and then to make them up into a glorious church.

The next passage, which is set down, verse 27. we conceive, is taken out of Jer. xxxi. 33. 34. of which the apostle citeth no more than maketh for his present purpose. There is mention there of a covenant which God would make with the house of Israel, and among other things promised in that covenant, this is one, that *the Lord would forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more*; and upon this the apostle pitcheth, as most suitable to his purpose; being not only to prove the main point touching the enchurching of the Jews, but also to confirm and clear further the last thing, viz. That when the deliverer cometh, he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and be reconciled unto them. Now, this is fully confirmed here, where he shews it to be a covenanted mercy; and, withal, this passage proveth, that when the Lord shall have taken away their sins, then questionless they shall become a people to God, a visible national church; for in that place of Jeremiah the sum of the covenant is said to be this, *That God would be their God, and they should be his people*; and therefore the apostle says, *For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

There is one difficulty here, which must be removed. Such as plead for Christ's personal coming to reign with his saints a thousand years before the day of judgment, alledge this for a proof of his personal coming at the conversion of the Jews, when it said, *The Redeemer shall come out of Zion.* But, in short, we answer, That this cannot import a second personal com-

ing of Christ, to work a temporal deliverance unto the Jews; For, 1. the apostle is not here speaking of the restoration of the Jews to their own land, but of mercies of a more spiritual nature; as of their being made a visible national church, and becoming the professed covenanting people of God, enjoying the ordinances of life: And so, 2. he must mean such a coming as is relative to this mercy, and the mercy being of a spiritual nature, his coming must be of a spiritual kind also, even a coming by the power of his Spirit. 3. In the places cited, as it is true, that the Lord is speaking of temporal mercies and deliverances in the preceding verses, Isa. lix. 16. &c. yet it is as true, that, from ver. 20. he is speaking only of spiritual mercies, and there only is there mention made of his coming. 4. The apostle's making mention of one spiritual fruit of Christ's coming, sheweth what a coming he meaneth; *He shall turn away iniquity from Jacob*: Now, this is a spiritual mercy, and Christ doth this where he comes, not personally, but in the power of his Spirit. 5. This is further confirmed from that other place cited out of Jeremiah, where there is nothing but spiritual mercies mentioned. 6. The scripture expresseth but two personal appearances, one when he came to suffer, and another when he cometh to judgment, Heb. ix. 28. --- *And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.* There is but a second time of his appearing, and by this opinion there should be a third coming of his. 7. This will be clear, if you consider Acts iii. 26. where, as would appear, the apostle Peter has an eye unto this very place, and says, *Unto you first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* Now, how was he sent to do this? certainly it behoved to be by his Spirit; for he was not sent personally immediately after his resurrection; but this sending is after his resurrection;

and a sending which then had immediate effects, and which was first held forth unto the Jews, and so no personal sending.

8. The very term whereby Christ is stiled in the original, in that place of Isaiah, clears it; where he is called *Goel*, which ordinarily being attributed to Christ, implies a redemption by a price, being properly used to signify the redemption of mortgaged or woodfret land, by the nearest kinsman, by laying down the price; so Christ, as our kinsman, delivered his mortgaged people, by laying down his life a ransom. Now, he may come thus, after he has laid down the price, and prove a *Goel* where he comes not personally.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. God may keep a land long under sad and sharp dispensations, because of their rebellion and sin, and yet may turn gracious towards them at length; and when his anger is turned away, may make them enjoy better days than ever they have had before: Now, says Paul, *all Israel shall be saved*; this points out an excellent condition which they shall then have, though now, in God's anger, they be a scattered and peeled people, living in contempt, and under infamy and reproach.

II. When God shall again gather the remnant of his flock out of all countries, Jer. xxiii. 3. and begin to rejoice over her with joy, and rest in his love, Zeph. iii. 17. then shall the Jews become one church; even all the tribes shall unite together, and make up one national church, Jer. l. 4. 5. and a church it shall be, that shall flourish in ordinances, and other church privileges, Jer. xxxi. 31. and xxxii. 38. and shall enjoy much of God's favour, and many testimonies of his love, Jer. xxxi. 28. xxxiii. 9. &c. xxxii. 41. &c. and xlvii. 27. Zeph. iii. 17. &c. Ezek. xxxiv. 25. &c. and shall be a humble, mourning, holy people unto the Lord, Jer. l. 4. 5. having received pardon at the Lord's hand, Isa. xxxiii. 24. Jer. xxxi. 24. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. &c.: Thus

they shall be a glorious and pure church, having pure ordinances, and God signally among them, Zech. viii. 23. Micah iv. 1. 2. Thus *all Israel shall be saved*. See further, Zech. x. 6. &c. Ezek. xxviii. 25. 26. xxxvi. 8. &c. and xxxix. 25. &c.

III. Tho' many may live long under the ordinances within the church of God, and never reach the crown of glory; yet a people under lively and powerful ordinances are in a happier condition than others who live without God, and Christ in the world, and so in respect of them may be said to be *saved*; the gospel having that effect upon some, as to save them from their gross abominations, as 2 Pet. ii. 20. and all of them being in a fair way for the kingdom of heaven, having the ordinances, the only way thereto, among their hands; for when the Jews shall be enchurched again, and have the gospel ordinances set up in purity among them, tho' there shall be many hypocrites and hollow-hearted professors among them, Ezek. xx. 38.; yet all of them are said here to be saved, as being in a fair way for salvation: *So all Israel shall be saved*.

IV. We must not obtrude any thing upon people without a warrant, under pretext that it is a mystery, or that which passeth the reach of human reason: tho' Paul called this business a mystery, yet he confirmeth it out of scripture, saying, *As it is written*.

V. God's ordinary method of delivering a people from under the sad and sore strokes of vengeance, which have been poured out upon them because of their iniquities, is first to pour upon them the spirit of repentance, and turn them from their iniquities: for to prove that they shall be delivered from the sad judgments under which they have been lying this long time, he sheweth, that they shall be delivered from their iniquities; *The deliverer shall come out of Zion, who shall turn away iniquity from Jacob*.

VI. It is not in man's power to repent and

and turn home to God; nor will all the sad judgments which they may ly under, produce this effect, but it must be wrought in them by the almighty power of Jehovah; it is the work of the deliverer who must come out of Zion: *The deliverer shall come out of Zion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

VII. All the pardon and delivery from sin which a people get, is only in and thro' Jesus Christ, he is the only deliverer from sin and iniquity; for it is Christ who is here called the Deliverer, and he is called *the Deliverer*, by way of emphasis and eminency, to shew, that there is not another: *The deliverer shall come out of Zion, &c.* See Acts iv. 12.

VIII. Christ the ransom and deliverer of souls, cometh to them with pardon and remission, in and thro' the gospel, offering them pardon upon gospel terms, and working repentance in them according to the tenor of the gospel; and thus must he be expected and looked for: *The deliverer shall come out of Zion.*

IX. When a people who have been under the chastising hand of God, because of their transgressions and iniquities, do once get repentance from the Lord, and turn from their ungodliness and sinful courses, they are then fair for deliverance from the stroke, and a re-enjoyment of all their former favours: for here lieth the force of the apostle's argument, whereby he would prove the re-enchurching of the Jews: *that the deliverer shall come out of Zion, who should turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

X. When the nation of the Jews shall have the spirit of repentance poured upon them, and shall turn from their unbelief, they have then a covenant to look to, whereby they may expect a reception into a covenant state, and a new instalment into the church privileges which formerly they were excluded from: *For this is my covenant with them, &c.*

XI. Whatever deductions or inferences we bring from scripture, they should not

be groundless, but such as may be warranted by the word of God; for the apostle proves his inference from the first place of scripture, by another place; he proves, that place where it is said, *The deliverer shall come out of Zion, &c.* doth signify, that the Jews shall again be enchurched, and made partakers of their former privileges, by another, where it is said, *For this is my covenant, when I shall turn away their iniquity.*

VERSES 28. 29. *As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sake.*

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

THE apostle proceedeth in the confirmation of the future calling of the Jews, and gives some grounds of reason, of which there is one here, that he ushereth in with a prolepsis, or the obviating of an objection. The Gentiles might object and say, How can it be that the Jewish nation can ever be re-ingrafted, and made a church to Christ, seeing they have vilipended, and cast behind their back, the gospel of Christ, and the offer of life thro' him, and for that cause are now in a state of enmity with God? To this he answereth, 1. by granting, that the Jewish nation were indeed accounted enemies to God, and were hated and dealt with as enemies, for the contempt and slighting of the gospel; *As concerning the gospel they are enemies.* And, 2. sheweth the occasion of this, *For your sakes*; that is, because you Gentiles welcomed the gospel so chearfully, therefore the Jews stumbled at it: Or, these words may be looked on as holding forth the advantage that the Gentiles got by the Jews rejecting of the gospel: It was for your sake or advantage, for by means thereof ye were brought in into their room and place. Next, he addeth a reason confirming the point in hand;

But as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sake: Tho' now, would he say, the body and bulk of the Jewish nation have rejected the gospel, and are therefore out of court with God, yet that nation hath a room in his affection; *they are beloved*, and that because of the covenant and promises which God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their forefathers; *for the father's sake*: And the ground of all is given, *as touching the election*; that is, because of God's separating them as his peculiar people among all the nations of the earth, Deut. vii. 6. in that respect the nation is yet beloved of God, and since they are beloved of God, they will be enchurch'd.

In the next verse he confirmeth this ground; for it might be said, What tho' the Lord choos'd that nation once, as his peculiar people, what says that to their future conversion? O, says he, *the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*: Whatever favour or gift he bestows upon a people or person, out of free love, he rueth not, he taketh it not back again; he changeth not his purpose and resolution of good to any.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ be the most excellent and glad news that ever was heard tell of, yet many to whom it comes, make little good use thereof, they slight it and abuse the same, and trample upon the offers thereof; for so did the Jews here, they were *enemies for the gospel's sake*.

II. Tho' men think light of the gospel, and care not much to vilipend and trample upon the same; yet the abuse thereof is one of the greatest controversies which God hath against a people, and is such a quarrel as will provoke God to deal with such as open enemies, take his favour from them, and denude them of the enjoyments and privileges which they had by the gospel: Thus the Jews were *enemies concern-*

ing the gospel; their abuse of the gospel made God dispense with them, who were formerly dearly beloved friends, as enemies.

III. Tho' this unchurching of the Jewish nation, and dealing with them as enemies, was a fore punishment and loss unto the people of the Jews; yet it was not a little to the advantage of the Gentiles, it being that which occasioned the gospel's coming to them: So that, tho' God should have no church there, where he took most pains, yet he will not want a church and a people to avouch him, and accept of the gospel: *They are enemies for your sake*.

IV. As the Lord maketh choice out of his rich, free and undeserved love, of particular persons unto everlasting life; so doth he make choice of particular kingdoms and nations, to be his particular people, among whom he will set up his ordinances of life, and upon whom he will bestow many privileges and favours, of special note, tending to life: So the Lord made choice of the people of the Jews; they were his chosen people; therefore he says, *As touching the election*; there was an act of election that pass'd upon them, severing them from the rest. See Deut. xxxii. 8. 15. Psal. cv. 6. Deut. vii. 6. 1 Chron. xvi. 13.

V. God's setting apart of a people for his inheritance, upon whom he will bestow many saving means and mercies, will not exempt them from sad and sore corrections for their abuse of his mercy and kindness; but the more love he has manifested towards them, the sadder will his anger be when kindled against them for their vilipending of his goodness; for here the Jews are said to be *elect'd*, and a chosen people, and yet they are now accounted and dealt with as *enemies*, for the abuse and contempt of the gospel. See Amos iii. 2.

VI. Tho' God's dispensations may be sad and bitter at present, towards a poor people once privileged, and he may be dealing with them as enemies; yet there may

may be thoughts of love and goodwill in the bosom of God toward such, ere all be done: the poor people of the Jews are now dealt with, and accounted as enemies, and yet they are beloved; *As touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sake.*

VII. Tho' now the people of the Jews are at a low pass, because of their unbelief, and contempt of the gospel; yet the covenant made with their fore-fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is not forgotten by God, but is in force; and by virtue thereof, they have some room in God's affection yet: *They are beloved for the father's sake.*

VIII. God's taking the people of the Jews, and making them his peculiar people and treasure, and entering into covenant with their fore-fathers, is yet some ground of hope and expectation, that God will yet renew his ancient kindness and love toward that people, and take them again into his favour. This is the force of the apostle's argument, to prove that they shall again be re-enchured; because, *According to the election, they are beloved for the father's sake.*

IX. When men covenant with God, and walk in that covenant with uprightness of heart, they will not only reap advantage thereby themselves; but their posterity long after, who follow their footsteps may be the better thereof; *they are beloved for the father's sake.* See the tenor of the *Second Command.*

X. As when the Lord, who is perfect in wisdom, and infinite in power, and unchangeable, effectually calleth poor souls in to himself, and bestoweth upon them special and spiritual graces, doth not rue and cast them off again; so, when he has thoughts of good to a nation, bestowing upon them the grace of repentance, and will therefore bring and call them in to a covenant state, there is nothing that will hinder his purposes from taking effect; *the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

VERSES 30. 31. *For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*

HERE is another argument whereby the apostle cleareth the possibility of the future recovery and conversion of the Jewish nation, and it is taken from a similitude, with an advantage too. It is true, would the apostle say, the people of the Jews are now wicked, malicious enemies to Christ and the gospel, and unbelievers; yet for all that they may be converted and brought to believe, and fall in love with the gospel; for the time was when the Gentiles were unbelievers, and as imperfusable and untractable as they are this day, and yet, upon occasion of their rejecting of the gospel, God cast a blink of mercy on you, and made you believe; and why may not the day turn so, as tho' now they be unbelievers, yet they may obtain mercy and get grace to believe thro' your mercy? If, upon occasion of their rejecting of the gospel, ye got grace to welcome it; why may not they get grace to welcome it, upon the occasion of your embracing of it? If their ill hindred not you, much less will your good hinder them, but rather provoke them the more.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Faith is a flower that groweth not in the garden of either Jew or Gentile by nature; but all naturally are utter strangers thereto; for *the Gentiles in time past did not believe, and the Jews also have now not believed.*

II. Let the unbelief of a people or person be never so great, yet they need not conclude their case desperate, and think it impossible that ever they shall believe in Christ; for *tho' the Gentiles in times past have not believed, yet have they now obtained*

ed mercy; so tho' the Jews have now not believed, yet they shall obtain mercy.

III. Howbeit many look on faith as an easy matter, yet it is beyond the reach of nature, be it never so decked with human ornaments, and adorned with natural qualifications, yea, and common gifts, as illumination, and the like; it is the merciful act of God, and such as get it, *obtain mercy*; it is the gift of God, for such as get it, must obtain mercy from him,

IV. Tho' unbelievers bless themselves in their heart, and account themselves happy, yet are they truly to be pitied, being in the high-way to hell and destruction; and it is one of the greatest acts of pity and commiseration that can be shown to a poor unbeliever, to bestow faith upon him; so such are said here *to obtain mercy*, when they get grace to believe.

V. Unbelief under the gospel, however many account light of it, yet is accompanied with wilful disobedience and rebelliousness; there is an imper-suasible disposition, a contumacious refractoriness, and an iron sinew of wilfulness in every unbeliever under the light of the gospel: The word rendered here *unbelief*, signifies disobedience or unpersuasibleness, a spirit that will not receive conviction nor instruction.

VI. When God has a mind to do good to a people or a person, he can bring it about by most unlikely and improbable means, and make use of such occasions as folk would think would prove occasions to the contrary: God took occasion at the Jews-rejecting of Christ and the gospel, to bring in the Gentiles, and make them believe; *Ye have now obtained mercy thro' their unbelief.*

VII. The consideration of God's wonderful goodness and mercy towards other miserable sinners, should keep us from despairing thoughts of ourselves, God being unchangeable in mercy and power: for he proves that it is not impossible that the Jews shall be recovered, because the Gentiles who were once as evil as they are now,

were recovered; *Even so have these also now not believed, that thro' your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*

VIII. God's shewing kindness unto the Gentiles, and taking them in, who were once strangers, may confirm the Jews of their reception; and since the Jews rejecting of the gospel, was the occasion of the Gentiles receiving of it; much more shall the Gentiles believing, and receiving the gospel, be an occasion of inbringing the Jews; they shall be hereby moved to jealousy: *That through your mercy, they also may obtain mercy.*

IX. God's goodness to one people or person, will be so far from proving an obstruction unto the good of others, that rather it will open a door and make way for the same; *that through your mercy they may obtain mercy.*

VERSE 32. *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*

THIS is the apostle's last argument to prove the future conversion of the Jews, and it serves to confirm the preceding, and it is to this purpose, The great end and drift of God, who is infinite and unsearchable in wisdom, in ordering matters so, in his holy and wise dispensations, as that all, both Jew and Gentile, shall be once into a state of unbelief, locked up therein as in a prison, is not, that all might remain still there, and be undone, but that thereby God may have a greater occasion of manifesting his mercy and grace upon both Jews and Gentiles without difference; and so his ordering it so in his wise dispensation as that the Jews should become unbelievers, says not, that he will never convert them again; but rather, as they are in the same prison of unbelief in which the Gentiles once were, so shall they be set free in God's good time, out of his free love, as well as the Gentiles; for this is God's design and purpose, that as both

were

were once concluded in unbelief, so will God have mercy upon both.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. When God's dispensations seem sharpest and saddest towards his own chosen people, there may be thoughts of great good in God towards them; for when he concludes his chosen ones in unbelief, he has a mind then to shew mercy unto them.

II. Even such as he hath chosen from eternity, and has a purpose to do good unto, and shew mercy unto at length, are by nature in no better condition than others, but are under the power of sin and unbelief: *He hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all*; even such as he will have mercy upon are once concluded in unbelief.

III. Tho' we be all by nature lying under the power of sin and unbelief, yet can we not of ourselves win to a thorough conviction of this state and condition, but it must be done by the power of the Spirit of God becoming a spirit of bondage, incarcerating the poor soul, so as it can see no outgate, but ly in fetters until the day of execution: *God has concluded them in unbelief*; he has locked them up as in a prison-house where door and window is shut.

IV. God's ordinary way of bringing in his own people to himself, is, by becoming first a spirit of bondage, and so close imprisoning of them as there is no way of escape: *He concludeth them in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon them*.

V. There is none who can set a poor imprisoned soul at liberty, and loose these bonds wherewith it is bound, but he who locked them up; he who did cast down, can only raise up again: *God hath concluded them in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon them*.

VI. God's delivering of a poor captivated soul, and imprisoned wretch, lying under the sense and conviction of guilt, and hazard thereby, is an act of singular mercy,

and should be so accounted: *That he might have mercy*; an act of great kindness, free grace, love, and rich mercy.

VERSE 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

IN this last part of this chapter, the apostle is closing his disputes anent the profound points of religion which he has been treating of from chapter ix. with a grave epiphonema. He has been handling some mytterious heads, and clearing them out of the scripture, as touching Election and Reprobation; the of casting of the people of the Jews, and the taking in of the Gentiles in their place, and re-enchurching of the Jews with the Gentiles ere all be done; and now being to put an end unto these debates, least man's spirit should swell too big, and have too great a conceit of its own ability and capacity to take up and understand thoroughly these mysterious points, or, if not satisfied according to the principles of its own fond reason, it would cry out against God and his procedure: Therefore he concludes with an exclamation; and, like one in a rapture, he cannot find words to express his sense and apprehension of these mysteries; no words can be so significant as to serve his turn, and therefore he must take the words in their largest capacity, and so put the abstract for the concrete, and say, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God*, for, *O the deeply rich wisdom and knowledge of God*, &c.

In this conclusion, there is, 1. The apostle's exclamation and admiration vented, and the particulars concerning which he admires mentioned, ver. 33. And, 2. there is the grounds of this given, ver. 34. 35. 36. And, 3. A doxology in the end of verse 36.

First, He cries out, 1. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

God! wisdom and knowledge are near of kin, and often therefore conjoined by the apostle, as we see, Col. ii. 3. and hold forth that essential attribute of God, whereby all things possible, and past, present, and to come, are naked and bare before him, and their natures thoroughly known; he knows all things by his essence, and contrives and orders all things in the best manner imaginable: The apostle seeth both in God's *wisdom and knowledge*, his theoretical and practical understanding, to speak so; *riches*, that is, an abundance, and not only so, but *a depth of riches*, a vast huge incomprehensible measure, an unmeasurable quantity, and such an unmeasurable quantity as raiseth his admiration, and makes him cry out, *O the depth!* &c. 2. *How unsearchable are his judgments*, says he; that is, his decrees, purposes and resolutions, are such as cannot be searched out or sounded sufficiently; man is not able to search them to the bottom. 3. *And his ways past finding out*; that is, his manner of executing and bringing about his decrees and projects.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Whatever truths ministers are delivering unto people, they ought to be suitably affected therewith themselves, and so to carry themselves in the way of delivering of these truths, as that people may see they believe the thing which they say; for Paul, after he has been speaking of the most sublime points of religion, that they might see he was speaking nothing but what he conceived to be truth, he shews how much he was affected therewith, and cries out, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

II. Tho' vain and foolish men think to fathom the business of predestination, and the way of God's carrying on the grand business he hath upon the wheels, and therefore take that to be the only way of it which suits most with their carnal apprehensions, and cast all other ways

which agree not unto their conceptions; yet this is so profound and mysterious a gulph, as who dives most into it will be forced to cry out, *O the depth!* It far transcendeth the reach of man's understanding, that he who knows most of it, will be forced to admire most at it: Thus doth Paul admire; a man he was who knew most of this mystery, and yet a man that is ravished with admiration anent this mystery, and cries out, after he has explained the purpose, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

III. Tho' man, being but a blind mole in the things of God, cannot see thro' nor discern how God's great design of bringing about the salvation of his own chosen, is contrived in the depth of wisdom and knowledge; yet whoever wins to a clear and saving sight and uptaking of this mystery, will see infinite wisdom contriving it and carrying it on to a period: *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

IV. As God is infinite in himself, and every way incomprehensible; so all his perfections and essential attributes being nothing but himself, (for all that is in God is nothing else but God,) are beyond the reach and capacity of man: his knowledge and wisdom, in designing and carrying on his deep projects, are infinite, let Atheists, or faithless persons, say and conclude the contrary as they please: There is *riches of wisdom and knowledge*, and not only so, but *depth of riches*; there is a treasure of it, and a treasure that cannot be exhausted: *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

V. When a soul once is graciously exercised with the apprehensions of the perfections of the Most High, and is dwelling upon the spiritual thoughts of his excellency in his works and dispensations, he becomes so ravished with the sights he wins to, that, as a man transported, he cannot get words whereby to express his thoughts and

and conceptions: Thus Paul, as one so ravished, cries out, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

VI. As no man is upon the secrets of God, to know his purposes and decrees, till he reveal them, or else make them known by the event; so we must profess ourselves utterly unable to search these to the bottom; to know their order, nature, or causes, or the like: We must take up with the apostle, and close with this unanswerable question, *How unsearchable are his judgments!*

VII. Tho' God will certainly carry on his own designs, and none of his purposes shall fail; yet oftentimes his way is so in the deep sea, as none can discern what he is doing: And many times his own people are, thro' misbelief, despairing of ever seeing his work finished, when they look upon the face of present affairs, and see nothing but all things running cross in appearance. This is a truth past questioning, that *his ways are past finding out.*

VERSES 34. 35. *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?*

Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

THE apostle here gives some grounds of the unsearchableness of his judgments and ways, lest any should think he was admiring without just cause: and that these grounds may be the more convincing, he continueth in his proposing the matter question-ways, that the undoubted truth thereof may the more fully appear: And, 1. He makes use of a passage out of Isa. xl. 13. and therein followeth the Seventy, who vary in their words from the Hebrew, but keep still their sense: In Isaiah it is, *Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord?* or, who hath by weighing or pondering so found the mind of the Lord as to win to an exact knowledge thereof; that is, *Who can search out or dive so into the hid*

and secret purposes and decrees of God, as to win to a thorough knowledge of them, so as to know what his purposes are, and how he designeth to carry on the same? Or, *Who hath been his counsellor?* What was he who was beside God when he began these purposes to give his advice? Who was the man of his counsel, to direct him what course to follow? Was there any body to advise God what to intend, and how to carry on his projects? These questions have the force of a strong denial, and so he confirmeth that his judgments are unsearchable by men. Then, 2. says he, *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* that is, Who is he to whom God is beholden for his counsel and advice, in the contrivance of his grand purposes? And who is he to whom God is such a debtor, as he is bound to give an account of his ways? Or, is there any to whom God is so obliged, as that he may not dispose of them as he thinks fit, for his own most holy ends and purposes? If there be any that can shew the bond, and shew wherein they have obliged God, they shall be abundantly recompensed: All this containeth a flat denial.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' the godly have much insight in the ways of God, and know much of his mind, as revealed by his word and works, 1 Cor. ii. 16. yea, and are upon his secrets, Psal. xxv. 14. Prov. iii. 32. yet there is none that can challenge to themselves any hability to dive into the secret purposes and projects of the Almighty; the wisest and holiest cannot weigh them, so as to win to a thorough knowledge of them, but must profess ignorance of these: *Who hath known the mind of the Lord?*

II. The infinitely wise God stood not in need of, nor took any counsel or advice from man, who was but of yesterday, in passing his everlasting decrees, and concluding his purposes; so that it is but the height of folly for man to call the Lord,

and his ways to an account, and examine them by their own shallow apprehensions, and condemn, as none of his, all such ways as agree not with their model; such should know that God took no advice of them, nor needed to do: *Or who hath been his counsellor?*

III. God hath absolute power and sovereignty over all flesh, to dispose of them in his everlasting purposes, and in accomplishing his designs, as he thinks fit, he being independent in himself, upon any creature, and so free from all obligations; so that if any should quarrel God for his purposes or dispensations towards them; they would say as much, as that the supreme, independent Jehovah was obliged unto them for some favour received; *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?*

IV. If we were rightly considering God's transcendency and independency, we would not quarrel with any thing he doth, how cross soever unto our humours, but would silence ourselves, and be taken up with a holy admiration; for these are the grounds of Paul's admiration here.

VERSE 36. *For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

FOR the further confirmation of God's independency and absolute sovereignty, he shews, how all men and angels, and all things, depend upon him, both as to their first being and to their continuance in their being, and also to their end; 1. *Of him are all things*; that is, He is the first cause of their being, and from him alone they have the being which they have. 2. *Thro' him, or by him, are all things*; that is, As they have their being from God, so have they their dependence upon him; they would not subsist in their being without him; he is the preserver of both man and beast, and of all things. And 3. *To him are all things*; they are not ordered for

themselves, but for him and his glory, as their ultimate end. Then he addeth a doxology, saying, *To him be glory for ever. Amen.* A song of praise acknowledging God, of whom, thro' whom, and to whom are all things, to be worthy of glory and honour; and that for no short time, but for evermore; and closeth with a hearty wish that it may be so, saying, *Amen.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is the ignorance of our dependence upon the Lord, that makes us ready to quarrel with him for disposing of us otherways than we would wish. Knew we once that we had our life and all of him, we would not wax so proud as we do, nor think that he wrongs us, do what he will; for, to shew that God is obliged to none, but may do with all his creatures as he pleaseth, he telleth here, that *of him, and through him, and to him are all things.*

II. God, whose being is in and of himself, his name being *I am that I am*, is the sole author of being unto all his creatures, less and more; all of them, how glorious soever they be, are but pieces of life and being, borrowed from the fountain and well-spring of all being: *Of him are all things.*

III. When God has given a being unto his creatures, and quickened them with a ray of his life, they cannot subsist without him; he has so framed the creature, that it must owe its dependence upon its Creator every hour and moment, and must be preserved by him: He who kindled this spark of life first in the creature, must still be blowing at the coal, or else it will die out again; for *in him we move, we live, and have our being*, Acts xvii. 28. *Thro' him are all things*; soon would the creatures fall into pieces, if the same omnipotent hand were not still upholding which gave being at first.

IV. As the being of all creatures came first from the Ocean of all being, so like

a stream it must run back into him again: Himself was the ultimate end of all these borrowed beings; and there is no creature, no man nor angel that is created for themselves; but God's giving them a being, and preserving that being, and disposing of it, is wholly for the Author of all. God may dispose of all his creatures, to whom he was graciously pleased to give a being, as suits best with his own ends; as all things are of him, and thro' him, so all things are to him.

V. It is commendable for ministers so to deliver truths concerning God's goodness towards us, as to be teaching people what their duty should be in reference thereunto, and that by their own example, going before them, in a song of praise; as here the apostle cries out, *To whom be glory.*

VI. Never should we hear of any receipt from God, but our hearts should be raised up to sing a song of praise to him; especially when we hear of his bestowing upon us a natural being, or a being in grace, and preserving us in that state; for after the apostle has said, that of him, and thro' him, and to him are all things, then he sings a song of praise, and addeth, *To whom be glory.*

VII. In all our songs of praise to God, for all his benefits bestowed on us, we give nothing to him of our own; and our best way to praise him, is to acknowledge him to be glorious and excellent in himself, and worthy of all glory and honour from others, and wishing that this glory of his might be known unto, and acknowledged and declared by all: *To him be glory.*

VIII. As God's end in creating and conserving all things, was, the manifesta-

tion of his own glory: so a gracious soul should and will join in here with God, and do what in them lieth for promoting and advancing this great end; and so with that God may get glory of all things, seeing it is his due: When the apostle had said, *To him are all things*; that is, to his glory and honour; then he adds, *To whom be glory*: I am heartily content of that, and with it may be so; and O that it were so!

IX. As God is worthy to be extolled for ever and ever, and his glory cannot be seen or held forth; so a gracious soul rightly affected with the sense of God's goodness towards it or others, will be so ravished with the desire of having God extolled and magnified, that it will not take a short term-day to the matter, it will take an endless age to get his glory set out; and a soul truly sensible of his goodness, will see it to be such, as for it they are not able sufficiently to extoll him in time, and therefore cry out with the apostle here, *To him be glory for ever.* See Gal. i. 5. and 1 Pet. v. 11.

X. As our desires of extolling and praising God, should be real, hearty, sincere and earnest, and not superficial, complementing and verbal; so we may rest confident and be persuaded that God will have glory to himself, by his works of creation and providence; for the apostle closeth the song of praise, with an *Amen*, which not only imports the vehemency and earnestness of our desire to have it so, as being the same with *so be it*; but also, imports a persuasion or confidence, that it will be so as we say; and upon this score we add, *Amen* to our prayers, and so to our praises.

CHAPTER XII.

THE apostle having discoursed at large of the theoretical part of religion, and spoken at length unto some fundamentals thereof most necessary to be believed, and thus instructed these Romans touching what they were to believe; now he comes to speak of the practical part, and to press christian duties upon believers, and so to shew them what duties they ought to follow, that they may adorn their profession, and may not be a scandal to the gospel.

In this chapter he, *first*, exhorteth them to a holy christian deportment, in general, verses 1. 2.; and that, 1. positively, and then, 2. negatively. *Secondly*, He exhorteth, in a special manner, the officers of the Lord's house, unto some duties concerning them in particular, to verse 9. And, *thirdly*, presseth some particular duties, common to all Christians, to the end of the chapter.

VERSE 1. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

IN this verse he seriously exhorteth them in general, to holiness and a christian conversation, positively, and that under borrowed terms, alluding unto the sacrifices under the law; that as they under the law had their sacrifices, which they offered up in testimony of their thankfulness, (beside their expiatory sacrifices,) so Christians now should offer up some sacrifice too, seeing they are all now advanced to that honour and dignity, to be priests to the Lord; and that not any sacrifice of beasts, but themselves, soul and body, so dedicate and consecrate themselves wholly to his service, as not being any more their own, but God's; and so should no more live to themselves, but to him and his glory. And beside this duty, there are other two things in the verse; 1. The manner how this offering should be made, or the qualifications of this sacrifice, which are these: (1.) It must be a *living sacrifice*; that is,

your sacrifice must flow from a spirit of life within, the life of Christ, Gal. ii. 20. and must be the motions and actions, not of a soul void of the Spirit of Christ, but of one who is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and hath Christ living within him. (2.) It must be *holy*; that is, flowing from a new heart, a soul regenerate, a spirit sanctified with grace; grace must be the fountain it flows out of, and it must run through a channel of holiness; it must not be contaminated or defiled with any carnal, corrupt ingredient; and purged by Christ's blood. (3.) It must be *acceptable to God*; service performed unto God's glory, so that that be our last end; and duties performed according to God's revealed word, and so a service that he will accept and be well pleased with. (4.) It must be *reasonable*; not in outward shew and ceremonies of time and place, but *in spirit and in truth*, John iv. 20. &c. And (5.) it must be willing, free, ready, hearty, and cheerful; this is couched up in the word, *present yourself*; as the Jews sacrifices were presented at the altar before they were offered. 2. There is the arguments, or motives,

motives, which he useth to persuade them to this duty, and they are these: (1.) *I beseech*; I obtest you, I earnestly and seriously exhort you, I press you as heartily as I can; and I, the apostle Paul, do it; therefore you must obey. (2.) In the word *therefore*, which relateth unto what the apostle had been discoursing of before, viz. anent the doctrine of election and predestination, and the Jews rejection, and carrieth this argument in it: Seeing God, out of his mere free grace and love, hath chosen you to salvation, present yourselves a living sacrifice. (3.) A third argument in the word *brethren*, to this purpose: I affect you dearly as my brethren, and so it is out of no ill-will I exhort you to this, but out of love and tenderness of affection, knowing the necessity of it; therefore hear and obey. (4.) There is a fourth argument in it: You are brethren, partakers of the same grace with me, the adopted sons of God; and therefore you ought not to deny this service to God which I call for. (5.) The last argument is in these words, *by the mercies of God*, and it is a main one, to this purpose: God in his mercy hath let out bowels of tender affection to you, and for that cause I beg you would follow this exhortation; much tender love hath flowed towards you, and therefore it is your duty to offer up yourselves to this tender-hearted God.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Christians ought not to content themselves with the knowledge of fundamental truths of religion, touching things to be believed; but also they should labour for the practical part, and to know what is their duty, both towards God and man: And as ministers should be careful to clear folks judgments anent these things which are to be believed, so they should not rest there, but moreover they ought seriously to instruct them in, and persuade and move them to, their duties: all which is clear in the apostle's practice, in exhorting them

to a christian conversation, after he had instructed them in truths to be believed.

II. Until folks be once clear and well instructed in the matter of their justification before God, and have followed forth that way, they will not be able to follow forth christian duties, and yield obedience unto christian commands, acceptably: therefore doth Paul first clear the business touching justification, and then presseth them to holiness.

III. Tho' the Lord hath armed his servants with power and authority to command, yet they need not always use that authoritative way in enjoining duties; but as they see it most advantageous for the gaining of their point, to use it sometimes, and at other times to take a more calm way, rather entreating, as it were by way of begging a favour or courtesy, than commanding; when love and entreaty are most likely to gain, more is needless: so doth the apostle Paul here *beseech* them, seeing it was most likely that the very sense of these admirable mercies and favours he had been speaking of in the former chapter, would have melted and softened their hearts, so that with small labour they would have received any impression of that kind.

IV. It is not enough for ministers to clear duties unto people, but they ought to press them home with all earnestness and seriousness, and let people know, that they are dealing with them in serious sadness; and knowing what averseness and reluctancy is in people ordinarily, and how active and busy their spiritual enemies are to persuade them to the contrary; and therefore Paul here *beseebeth* them, or vehemently entreateth them, as the word may be rendered.

V. When people see the servants of the Lord exhorting and pressing them to their duty, with all vehemency and earnestness, as seeing some great necessity, by reason of profit upon the one hand, and loss upon the other hand, in the matter, it should

should be a forcible inducement to move them to a willing obedience; and if obedience be not yielded, their seriousness will make the peoples case more sad, both in regard of guilt and punishment; for the force of Paul's argument sheweth this.

VI. The doctrine of predestination and election, is not a doctrine tending to lull folk asleep in security, and to cause them shake themselves loose from all pains and endeavours; nor a doctrine destroying the freedom and liberty of man's will, in willing or nilling; nor yet a doctrine inconsistent with exhortations; for after Paul hath been treating of that doctrine, and as comprehending some of them at least, he finds a place for an exhortation to them all, and doth not look upon them as stocks or stones, but as rational creatures, endued with a faculty of willing and nilling, without any natural necessity, or external compulsion; and notwithstanding of their election he presseth them to holy duties.

VII. The doctrine of election is so far from making folks secure, that if it be rightly considered, it will be a sharp spur in the sides of his people, to run about all commanded duties: following of duties flows from it, by a clear and natural consequence; for the apostle deduceth this exhortation by way of an undoubted consequent, *therefore*; so that they turn the grace of God into wantonness and lasciviousness, who, because they are elected, as they think, do therefore shake off all obedience.

VIII. However believers, in respect of the measure of grace bestowed upon them, be of different sizes, some babes, some young men in grace, and some grown, exercised; and experienced Christians; yet as there is a firm union of fraternity betwixt them, so are they all children of one father, and stand under that relation to him; for they are all *brethren*, and this supposes a father.

IX. As this relation of brotherhood betwixt believers, layeth on a yoke on each

to be helpful to other in spiritual things, according to their places and stations; so it layeth an obligation on them to receive the help one of another, whether by direction, reproof, or admonition, in very good part, and submit unto and obey their wholesome counsel and advice: for that they might yield obedience unto this his command, he styles them *brethren*.

X. The best and most edifying way for ministers to press duties upon their flocks, and Christians upon one another, is, so to urge them as those whom we exhort may see and be convinced of our love to them; and where exhortations that come forth enwrapped in love are slighted, the guilt will be the greater: this is Paul's argument, *brethren*; thereby discovering his love and brotherly affection to them, the more to gain their obedience.

XI. It is the want of the serious consideration of the relation wherein believers stand in to God, that makes them slack in their christian duties; and as this relation layeth on stronger obligations to duty, so believing thoughts of it will be as oil to make their wheels run more swiftly: therefore the apostle, to incite them to this duty, puts them in mind of this, that they were *brethren*, and so had the same relation to God as their Father which he had.

XII. Believers, and none but believers, are the peculiar privileged people, whom the Lord maketh partakers of his fatherly and tender affections, and commiserations; for such Paul presseth by the *mercies of God*.

XIII. As God is the author of all mercy toward his children, hence called *the Father of mercies*, 2 Cor. i. 3.; so upon such he thinks it not enough to bestow one, but many such acts of mercy; every mercy carrying many in the bosom of it, and making way for more; and therefore we hear of *mercies of God* in the plural number.

XIV. The more expressions of God's compassion and merciful disposition toward

us, we meet with, so far ought we to be from turning God's goodness into lasciviousness, that, of all motives and inducements, pressing us to a holy life, this is one of the greatest, even the consideration of *God's mercies*; all and every one of God's mercies cry aloud for thankfulness in a holy life and conversation.

XV. It is a duty lying upon all the children of God, to be dedicating and surrendering themselves wholly, even their very bodies, unto God, for his service: this is the duty here pressed, *Present your bodies a sacrifice, &c.*

XVI. As the Lord loveth a chearful giver, so should we chearfully, willingly, and freely, offer ourselves and our services to God, and have such a heart to the employment, as to be ready at a call, still waiting for an invitation, and an open door to exercise ourselves in holy duties: therefore says the apostle, *Present yourselves:*

XVII. Whatever duties we perform, as acted by our own spirit, and in our own strength, will not be a sacrifice acceptable, but that service only is approved of God which floweth from a spirit of life within; and all such duties as are performed by one in whom the Spirit of Christ is not living, as in Paul, Gal. ii. 20. are but dead and lifeless, and accounted of God as a dead sacrifice; the sacrifice we must perform must be a *living sacrifice* in this respect.

XVIII. As the Spirit of God acting in believers is the first principal mover unto every good work, and so puts life in it; so our natures ought to be renewed, and our hearts sanctified by habitual infused grace of God, that so our duties may flow from a gracious sanctified soul; and must be washed in that cleansing and sanctifying blood of Jesus, otherways our sacrifice will not be *holy* and acceptable unto God.

XIX. As God is well pleased with christian duties, altho' they be imperfect, if flowing from a soul sanctified by grace,

and enlivened by the Spirit of Jesus; so it is our duty to be more carefully endeavouring to please God in our duties, than any else; and a soul that hath rightly surrendered itself to God, will be aiming at this mainly, as its main end, how it may please him unto whom it hath given up itself: for thus our service should be *acceptable to God.*

XX. Tho' it seemed good in the Lord's eyes to require of his people under the law, who were a people in non-age, under tutory, a service under a multitude of ceremonies, affixed to such a place and to such times; yet now he requireth of us under the gospel a more spiritual and pure service, *in spirit, and in truth*, John iv. 24.; our service now must be *reasonable*, as opposed to their typical and ceremonious service, in offering up irrational creatures. See 1 Pet. ii. 5.

VERSE 2. *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.*

IN this verse the apostle is pressing them unto another part of their duty, set down negatively, in more clear expressions, and then amplified and cleared from the contrary duty. Then, 1. he would not have them conforming themselves, or walk according to the fashions of the godless, unregenerate part of mankind in the world, who savour of nothing but this world, as if they were wholly composed of it, and hence called here *this world*, or *age*, because they are subject to changes; and all their glory, and whatever they have, will vanish ere long. 2. The contrary duty is, *But be ye transformed*; he would have them thoroughly changed and renewed as new creatures, growing in holiness daily: And this duty he clearerth, by shewing, (1.) The manner how it must be effectuated, viz. by getting the mind and intellectual part

part renewed, and endued with more spiritual knowledge, and sanctified illumination. (2.) The end for which they should, or the advantages that they would meet with if they would, endeavour after this renovation, viz. that *they prove what is God's will*; that is, that they may be acquainted and fall in love with God's law, and may make it their rule, and walk accordingly. And this will of God hath three epithets added, whereby to commend it, and to move them so much the more to this renovation of spirit, whereby they may be enabled to walk after God's will as their rule: As, 1. It is called *good*, because it is the mind of a good God, and holdeth forth nothing but what is good to us, and for our spiritual advantage: 2. *Acceptable*, as shewing wherein we shall be accepted of God, and what is that which is well-pleasing in his eyes: And, 3. *perfect*, because it is a pure and complete rule, without any mixture and any deficiency, able to hold forth to us the whole will of God, and to clear to us every duty which we ought to set about.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The following of the customs and fashions of the men of this world, is a great impediment to hinder Christians from giving themselves and their service up to God, to be employed for him and his glory; such a contrariety there is betwixt our God and the god of this world, *the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*, and inconsistency betwixt the service that the one requireth, and the other, as that no man can serve both; and therefore when the apostle in the former verse was desiring them to present themselves to God, he addeth this, as that which must necessarily be joined therewith, saying, *And be not conformed unto this world*.

II. There is an inevitable necessity that God's children must dwell and abide amongst worldly ones, or such as have their portion in this world, and by reason there-

of are still in hazard of being insnared by their evil example; and such is the force and strength of the corrupt conversation of bad company, as that even the best of God's children have reason to be walking circumspectly and warily, lest they be drawn aside and tainted by their coarse carriage; all which is held forth in this, when he exhorteth these believing Romans, *Not to conform themselves unto the men of this world*.

III. Unregenerate persons, are so related and near of kin (as it were) unto the world, in that they favour nothing and understand nothing but the world, and have their heart and their eye on it, and their portion in it, as that they borrow their name from it, and are fitly called by, the world, as their name; for such are here understood by *the world*.

IV. It is a duty lying upon all the children of God, to be labouring to keep themselves free of the vain sinful fashions of the world; and whatever seeming beauty their carriage be covered with, yet the children of God ought to be labouring not to conform themselves thereunto; for this injunction the Lord layeth on all believers: *That they be not conformed unto this world*.

V. Tho' men, following the guise of this world, may fondly and foolishly look upon themselves as happy enough notwithstanding; yet the truth is, whoever he be that is led away with the fashion of this world, and walketh no otherways than the men of this world do, he can have no ground to look upon himself as any other than one unregenerated and unrenewed: And in so far as any are renewed and changed, they walk after another fashion than the world doth, and in so far are not conformed thereunto: This is clear from the opposition which he maketh betwixt conforming ourselves to the world, and transforming ourselves.

VI. The most effectual way for people to win free from being tainted, and led away, with the enticing conversation of worldlings,

worldlings, is to be labouring after more and more renewing grace, whereby we may be more and more transformed; this is clear from the former ground.

VII. Hypocrites may deceive themselves in imagining that all is done when they have abstained from such gross corruptions and abominations, as the basest worldlings and corrupt men wallow in; but beside this abstaining from a conformity unto this world, it lyeth upon all to be labouring to be transformed and casten in a new mould; for it is not enough, not to be conformed unto this world, but also we must labour *to be transformed*.

VIII. As the case and condition of all by nature is such, as of necessity they must be changed and transformed, or else perish; so the children of God have in part such a corrupt nature carrying about with them, as will keep them still in exercise; and it lyeth on them as their duty, to be daily wrestling against it, and labouring more and more after more and more of this new nature; for this is laid even on believers, *be ye transformed*.

IX. However it be the alone work of omnipotence, either to renew souls in whole or in part, and there be nothing in man that can justly claim any share of the glory of the work; yet the Lord in making such a change, dealeth with souls not as meer stocks, but as rational creatures, and so dealeth with them as to the use of these means, in the use whereof the Lord useth to send down renewing grace, as if they were instrumental in the business, when as the Lord is free in his working; *and worketh in us both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure*, and free grace; the Lord hereby holding forth what our misery is, by reason of the ability and strength we have lost, and what duty, yet notwithstanding of this our sinful contracted impotency, lyeth upon us; and what is the ordinary way that God useth to bring about this work, to wit, by driving us out of ourselves to him, whose work only it is to do

it. Thus doth the apostle press these to this renovation, enjoining them *to be transformed*, not as if it were in their own power; (which is nothing here) but to drive them in to him, who alone is of power to bring that work about, and to rouse them up from that security, lest they should imagine they ought to do nothing, but let the Spirit do all.

X. Such is the deplorable and lamentable case of all by nature, that that brave image which once we had, is now lost and gone, and that sweet, holy and righteous nature, which God bestowed upon us at the beginning is now away; these both are clear in that we must have all made new again, *or renewed*, which supposeth a thing to have been new, and now old.

XI. The very minds of men, however there remain in them some common notions concerning a deity, and principles of equity, yet as touching any saving knowledge or right uptaking of God, or the way to him, are by nature struck blind and cannot see the things of God, and full of unbelief, ignorance and confusion; yea, and the minds of the best, who see but in part, are not fully freed from this disease; for all their minds need to be *renewed*.

XII. In bringing about this renovation and transformation, the Lord useth to begin at the mind and understanding part, and sendeth down the spirit of illumination, and removeth that natural darkness and confusion that oppresseth the same, so that the man seeth his lost condition, and the vanity and useflessness of all creatures, as to his supply, and seeth where help is laid, and thereby the man is brought, thro' grace, to a closing with him, thro' whom all good cometh; and therefore when Paul is pressing them to be transformed, he adds, *by the renewing of the mind*, to shew, that this way the work must begin, and be got done.

XIII. Believers are so far from being excoemed from obedience unto the law of God,

God, that obedience, or their approving of the will of God, is a natural result and effect flowing from their new nature which they have received, and their renovation and illumination is a direct mean unto this approving of the good will of God; therefore, says Paul, *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that will of God.*

XIV. However natural men may pretend great love and respect unto God's commands, and seem outwardly to walk in conformity unto them, yet none but such as are truly renewed, can, or will, truly and cordially approve of and join with the commandments of God; and the more we be illuminated and renewed, the more will his will bear bulk with us, and we will conform our lives the more thereunto; for renovation and illumination is the way to the approving of God's will.

XV. It is the duty of all believers, to prove God's will, by searching into and studying it, that they may find it out; and to approve and have an high account of it, when it is known, and embrace it heartily; all this is included in this, to *prove his will.*

XVI. None can expect freedom from the contagion of evil company, or to be kept from being conformed unto this world, or the men thereof, but such as are labouring for a spiritual sense and uptaking of God's law, and have high thoughts of it, as the only rule they ought to walk by, which is clear from the last words of this verse compared with the beginning of it.

XVII. The law of God, which is a declaration of his will touching what he will have us to do, is good, containing nothing but what is both good in itself, and what is for our good; hence it is here called *good*: And were God's law well tried and spiritually searched, by senses exercised, it would be found so.

XVIII. There is no way imaginable how we shall please God, but by taking this will of his to be our rule, according to which we should square our lives, tho' our foolish

imaginations would furnish us with ways abundance besides; therefore it is called his *acceptable* will, as shewing wherewith God will be well-pleased, and what service shall be taken off our hands, and what not.

XIX. This law of God is complete and perfect, holding forth whatever is necessary to be known by us in order to salvation, so as we may fully rest upon it, and reject whatever is not there approved or commanded either in general or particular, and need not run to any tradition, or decrees, for new additions.

XX. The consideration of this, that this law of God is good, full, complete, and sheweth what way we shall get our Lord pleased, should stir up all his people to a conscionable studying, proving and approving what this will of God is. This is the end wherefore he gives these epithets unto the law here, even to spur them up unto the proving and approving of it, as knowing what difficulties are lying in their way, and of what use it will be to them.

VERSE 3. *For I say, thro' the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

IN this second part of the chapter, which continueth to the ninth verse, the apostle is about the pressing of modesty, humility, and diligence, in the officers of the Lord's house.

In this verse, after that the apostle hath used a kind of preface (wherein he holdeth forth his power and authority, as being an apostle, and one especially commissioned and sent by the Lord, and that so as thereby breathing out humility, and shewing how little he was proud or boasting thereof, by calling that office wherein he was employed, a *grace*, and a *grace given to him*, not usurped; and by virtue of

of this office unto which he was placed, he authoritatively commanded them, and every one of them, without exception, saying, *I say*.) he layeth the duty authoritatively upon them, first negatively, and next positively, and withal enforceth it with many strong arguments. The duty is first set down negatively, in these words, *Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think*; whereof the meaning is not as if the apostle would not have them striving for more wisdom, and to excel in it, seeing he willeth all God's children to strive after perfection; but the meaning is this, He would not have them imagining they had more than indeed they had, nor proud and conceited of what they had, as if it were their own, and not given to them; nor so puffed up with an overweening opinion of their own worth and excellency, as if there were none comparable to them; nor so taken up with the high estimation of their parts and gifts, as to take encouragement therefrom to dive into mysteries, not clearly revealed, and imagine in themselves a dexterity to find out what none else could do, and so to be taken up with the searching after such things as will but occasio torment and vexation, and no way tend to edification; nor lastly, to be so proud of their parts and abilities, as to meddle with matters beyond their sphere, and not within the compass of their callings and employments. Next, the duty is set down positively in these words, *But to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*; whereby the apostle holdeth forth the duty of the officers of the Lord's house to be this, That they ought to have mean and low thoughts of themselves and their abilities, and to be satisfied with that measure of endowment which the Lord hath blessed them with, and to be painful in those exercises which may instruct them in sobriety and modesty; and use, in all humility and modesty, these gifts God hath bestowed upon them, unto the edification of others, and

that within the compass of their own calling. Now, this exhortation the apostle presseth with many arguments, in this and the following two verses.

In this verse the arguments may be these,

1. In the particle *for*, which may be looked on as a connection unto the former verses; and the argument will be this, You are all bound and obliged to present your bodies a living sacrifice to God, and to be transformed, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable will of God; and here is one main impediment which must be taken out of the way, You must have low and humble thoughts of yourselves, and of your parts and qualifications, otherwise you will not be able to reach these Christian necessary duties which must be followed; therefore you must beware of this impediment, and think not of yourselves more highly than you ought. 2. Another argument may be this, I, with all authority, command you to look to this duty, therefore you must not slight it: *I say*. 3. I do not command you from my own head, but I am a messenger sent upon this employment; there is a commission given to me, and by virtue of this commission I command and charge you: *I say, thro' the grace given to me*. 4. It is a duty not lying upon any one alone, nor any one kind of officer, but it lieth upon all officers to see to it; and therefore, seeing it is so necessary unto all, none must shirk it: *I say, unto every man that is among you*. 5. There are arguments lying into the very bosom of the duty, that may sufficiently enforce it: It is a shame for any Christian, more especially church-officers, to be found lyars, and to do that which will infatuate them, and make them misken themselves; but so it is, that for a man to think of himself more highly than he ought, is to give out himself as a lyar, and to befool himself; therefore this course must not be followed. 6. You must not be puffed up with a vain conceit of yourselves, as if there were none equal to you, and as

if you had a monopoly of gifts and endowments, for *God hath distributed to every man a measure*; every officer in his house hath his own sphere, and none of you hath all, and so you should not despise and undervalue others. 7. It is God that distribureth these gifts in their measures, and every one of you hath that which God has thought fit to bestow upon you, and what God doth is done in wisdom and in justice, and therefore you should not be puffed up, as if you had that which you have not; for hereby you shew your discontentment at that measure which God hath bestowed, and repine at it, and so in effect say, that God hath wronged you, or that he hath not dealt wisely enough; in not giving you a greater measure; and this is a heinous sin, and therefore think not of yourself more highly than you ought. 8. There is another argument in this, Whatever portion or measure you have, you have no cause to be proud of it, for it is not a robe of your own sewing; it is the free gift of God: It is *God who hath dealt to every one the measure of faith*, and he is not bound to give but as he pleaseth; he measureth out as seemeth good in his eyes. By faith here is understood the knowledge of God by faith, or the knowledge of faith manifested in the word.

HENCE OBSERVE,

I. Pride and conceitedness in these gifts and endowments which we have received, is a main hinderance to growth in grace and in holiness, God being thereby provoked to leave us to ourselves, because of the pride of our hearts, that we may find by experience how little strength there is in us for the acquiring of any thing, and may learn to be humble in time coming. This is clear from the connection with the former verses, where he had been pressing them to holiness, and then comes in with this exhortation, that they should not think highly of themselves, with a *for*.

II. So strong is that corruption of innate

pride of heart within us, if once it get vent, and especially if it get any thing more than natural to ground upon, that it will hardly be got rooted out; and when folks once give way unto this evil, that is so natural a weed to us, and suffer it to grow up, even in that garden where there are flowers of God's own planting, they will not easily be quit of it: This is clear from the many arguments which the apostle maketh use of to dissuade them from it; and from this authoritative powerful way of commanding them, *I say*, or *I command*.

III. It is the duty of faithful pastors, when they see an evil deeply rooted among people, as seeming to be grounded upon, or to gather life from, seeming fair pretexts, to be so much the more careful, painful, and serious, in labouring to get that evil removed; for Paul saw what pretexts they might have had for their pride and undervaluing of others, *viz.* gifts bestowed upon them by God, more than upon others; and knew that pride rising upon any ground, and far more when springing from such a soil, can hardly be got rooted up, and therefore dealeth the more seriously, and presseth his exhortation with the stronger reasons, and more piercing convictions, and his example teacheth us to do the like.

IV. As ministers are men of authority, and in all the points of their office ought so to demean themselves as men clothed with authority, by their commission: And as it is an effectual way in dealing with proud sinners, puffed up with a vain conceit of their own worth and abilities, to let them see God to be their party, who is not well pleased with them for their pride; so in dealing with such sinners, as seem most hardly to be reclaimed, and especially in dealing with such as think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, they ought to put forth all their authority, as commissioners of the great God of heaven, and not to rub over the sore gently, seeing these are such as think themselves so sure,

sure, that no reason can persuade them; therefore doth the apostle, in dealing with such, put forth his authority, and say, *I say*.

V. When ministers are put to the exercising of their office in an authoritative way, in dealing with such sinners as cannot soon be convinced of their guilt, it were good for them then to be taking a view of their calling, and to consider whether or not God hath authorized them for that effect, and hath commissioned them to use such commanding authority; for Paul, when he useth this commanding word, *I say*, addeth presently, (as taking a fresh look of his calling, and having his commission within his view) *through the grace given unto me*.

VI. Howbeit the simple exhortations and friendly requests and admonitions of the servants of the Lord, ought to be regarded, they being clothed with a commission from the Lord; yet when they are put to use that authority, and to put forth that commanding power, wherewith the Lord hath impowered them, people ought to regard the more what they say, and their words when backed expressly with authority, ought to have great weight with people; and their neglecting of such authoritatively enjoined duties, will be a great sin, as being an avowed undervaluing, and palpable slighting, of the power and authority of God, who hath commissioned them; therefore doth the apostle make use of this as an argument, *I say*.

VII. As it is God's prerogative royal to send forth whom he pleaseth, and erect and set up in his church what kind of officers seemeth good in his eyes; so the consideration of the weight of the employment, the hazard in case of mal-administration, the many temptations and inconveniences that do attend such as are employed, and the danger of running unsent, should make men wary lest they engage in that office without a clear call from the Lord; therefore Paul says, this grace of apostle-

ship was given unto him, and he took it not ungiven, nor did he intrude himself.

VIII. As ministers, in reprovng sin, and exhorting to duty, ought to adhere to their commission, and be sure that they deliver nothing but what they have a warrant for; so it should be a strong inducement to move people to welcome ministers exhortations; and accept of their rebukes heartily, when they see that they speak not of themselves; but by virtue of a commission, according to which they ought to walk; and it will highly aggravate their guilt who reject their counsels and advice, when they are or may be ascertained, that they hear nothing charged upon them, or pressed, but what suiteth with their commission, who are sent of the Lord to speak to them; for Paul here addeth, *I say, thro' the grace given unto me*; by virtue of this office which is given to me, I command you to do this.

IX. It is a singular favour, and a gracious gift of God to be employed in and fitted for the ministry, considering how unworthy and sinful such are in themselves, whom he employeth, and what a honour it is to be joint co-workers with God in that great work of carrying on the interest of Christ, and saving poor souls, and bringing in to Jesus his ransomed ones; and as it is such an act of grace in itself, so should such as are employed therein, look upon it, that thereby they may be kept humble, and may be stirred up to thankfulness and diligence; for Paul's apostleship is here called *grace*. See Rom. xv. 15.

X. As always ministers ought to be careful that they contradict not what they preach; that when they dissuade people from sin, and exhort them to duty, they be not found guilty of the same sins themselves, nor unwilling to put hand to the same duty which they press upon others; so, in a special manner, when they are dehorting people from pride and self-conceit, and using their authority thereanent, they should take heed that they appear not to be proud, and to boast of their power and

and authority, lest they put down with the one hand what they seem to build up with the other; therefore Paul in dehorting these church-officers from pride and boasting in their parts and endowments, and exercising his authority, lest they should think him guilty of the same crime, when he speaketh of his apostleship, he useth humble terms, that they might see he was not proud of what God had given him, for he looked on it as an act of free grace and undeserved favour, and calleth it *grace given to him*.

XI. As the Lord hateth sin, and cannot away with it in whosoever it be; and as the Lord hath given commission to his servants to rebuke sin in whosoever they find it; and as all need to be warned of their skaith and danger, and to be convinced of their guilt; so it is the duty of ministers to walk answerable unto their commission, and to be no accepters of persons, but to speak to all, seeing they have a charge over all; and to warn every man without exception, as Paul's example teacheth us here, who saith, *I say, to every man that is among you*.

XII. As ministers are overseers of the flock, and other officers in their own place have some kind of oversight; so it is the duty of all such officers to be standing to their post, staying among the people, conversing with them, and going in and out before them; therefore are the officers here stiled such as *are*, abide, or exist, or live *among you*.

XIII. Howbeit we have no parts nor gifts but what we have received, and must acknowledge God to be the giver of; yet such is our corruption, that we are ready to abuse the best gifts of God, and grow proud thereof, and boast as if we needed thank none but ourselves for them, and are ready to be puffed up as if we had more ability than we have, and could do more than indeed we can do, and as if there were none like to us; this we see in these officers whom Paul taxeth here.

XIV. Altho' the gifts of God, how small soever they be, should not be undervalued by us, who are less than the least of all his mercies, but he duly acknowledged and heartily thanked therefore; yet it is a heinous sin when such, upon whom God hath bestowed gifts and parts, swell so with pride, as if there were none equal to them, but they, and they only, were the gifted and endued persons, enabled with abilities to search out new and strange doctrines and positions, and interpretations never heard of before, 1 Tim. vi. 3. 4. and to dive in to the secrets of the Lord, and such things as tend not to edifying, neglecting more necessary and obvious truths; and to meddle with any purpose, tho' no way within the compass of their ordinary calling and employment: This is the sin he dehorteth them from, *viz. thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think*.

XV. The very heinousness of the sin itself, as making a man a manifest and notorious liar, and naturally tending to make a man turn a fool, so as not to know himself, nor how he ought to behave towards others, should sufficiently fear Christians, and especially the servants of the Lord, from this insatiating sin of *thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to do*.

XVI. Whatever gifts or graces it pleaseth the Lord to bestow upon us, we should labour to have mean and low thoughts of ourselves, remembering what a company of infirmities we are compassed about with, and how unworthy we are of the same; and to have settled contented thoughts with the measure he hath given, knowing it is of his mercy and free love that we get any measure at all; and to study what mainly tendeth to edification, and not questions that gender strife, and what may teach sobriety, therewith; for this he exhorteth them to, that *they would think soberly*, or unto sobriety.

XVII. Such is the wisdom of the Lord, who sendeth not a message by the hand of a fool, that whosoever he employs in the work

work of the ministry, or upon whomsoever he confers an office in his house, he fiteth them, in some competent measure, for the work he employeth them in, and bestoweth upon them some measure and proportion of this faith; therefore saith he, *God hath dealt to every man*; that is, every officer, for of such he speaketh here.

XVIII. No man, however well gifted, can say he hath attained unto perfection in these gifts, for how great soever an abundance he hath received of them, he hath but a measure, and a certain proportion measured out to him, and the consideration hereof should lay the peacock feathers of such as are ready to be puffed up with a vain conceit of themselves, because of their abilities; others have their proportion as well as they have theirs, and they have not all: therefore saith Paul, *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*.

XIX. As such as have overweening thoughts of themselves, do tacitely charge God of injustice, in that he hath bestowed fewer abilities upon them, than they conceive they deserve; and beside this, are heinously guilty of ingratitude, in that they are so far from acknowledging God's goodness in what he hath given, that rather they are displeased because more is not given; so the consideration of this, that it is the only wise God who dispenseth as he pleaseth, and always freely and undeservedly, may keep folk from overweening thoughts of themselves, and undervaluing thoughts of others; therefore to scar them from this sin, he telleth them that it is *God who distributeth to every man his measure of faith*, and no man can get more than what God pleaseth to give.

XX. As every good gift cometh down from above, and is not the fruit of any man's work or pains (tho' God is pleased to confer gifts and endowments ordinarily, in such a way of painfulness) so a right look of this may make men quiet, and put them far from boasting, or to think of themselves beyond what they ought; and

the single and rare backlooks unto the prime fountain of those gifts, and looking no higher than the nearest cause, makes men swell so with big conceits of themselves, as if there were none equal to them; wherefore Paul mindeth them, that it is *the Lord* that these gifts come from, and it is called *the measure of faith*, or of the knowledge of God thro' faith in Christ, or of the knowledge of the truth revealed by the Spirit in and by the word, and therefore called *the ministration of the Spirit*; 1 Cor. xij. 7. and elsewhere *the gift of Christ*, Eph. iv. 7. now these are not attainable without help from God.

VERSES 4. 5. *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

IN these verses the apostle is further pressing his former exhortation, viz. that every one of them should labour to use the talent and measure of knowledge, which God hath bestowed upon them, unto edification, in all humility and modesty, and not to have high proud thoughts of themselves, nor condemn others about them, upon whom possibly God hath not bestowed such a measure of gifts and knowledge, as on them: And his argument may be thus taken up whole, In the universal, visible church political, there are several employments, and for every distinct employment there are distinct officers, and these officers requiring distinct measures and proportions of qualifications; and all these officers so and so qualified, for such and such employments, are acted by virtue of one head, Jesus Christ, from whom their power, qualifications, and the actual exercise thereof cometh, unto one end, viz. the mutual edifying one of another, and of the body: Therefore, no member, or officer, ought to be proud of his qualifications, seeing he is not all, nor hath all the qualifications;

and whatever he hath, he should not insult over, but be helpful unto others; and this he illustrates by a similitude of the natural body, wherein there are many members, and these having distinct employments and works about the body, and for this cause are endued with fit habilities, and every one hath his distinct gift and faculty, as the eye to see, the ear to hear, the feet to walk, &c. and there is none of all these members that is lording it over the rest, and insulting over, or undervaluing them as useless and to no purpose, but all are contributing their utmost for the help and supply of one another, and of the whole body; no jarring among them, but perfect concord and agreement, every one sympathizing with another, no member usurping the charge and function of another; so nor should be here in this politic body of the catholic visible church, which is the body of Christ.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Spiritual souls will have their senses so exercised in spiritual things, that they can make a spiritual use of external things that do occur, and upon them read their duty: And ministers of the gospel may, in a spiritual way, make use of homely and cleanly similitudes to illustrate and clear points, and thereby teach people how to gather their lesson themselves from ordinary occurrences, and look spiritually on ordinary objects; all which Paul teacheth us, by using this obvious similitude of our natural body, to illustrate what he was speaking.

II. There is one catholic politic church visible; for notwithstanding churches in several countries or congregations, have distinct names from the place where they are, and go under the name of distinct churches, as if they were complete and entire; yet, to speak properly and accurately, they are but integral parts of the catholic politic body or church visible, which is but one, Eph. iv. 4. consisting of all that profess faith in Christ thro' the world, and their

officers; for he says, *We being many are one body*, joining with the rest himself who was a member nor officer in no particular church or congregation, but a pastor and preacher to the whole world. See Eph. iv. 4. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 14.

III. In this one body there are officers distinct from other constituent members, and so it is not a homogeneous body, but heterogeneous; not as if these officers were distinct from the officers of particular congregations, but in regard that, 1. at the first constitution and gathering of the gospel church, these extraordinary officers that were sent forth then, such as apostles, prophets and evangelists, were universal officers, and officers to the whole catholic church. 2. Every particular church and congregation, which is an integral part of this one catholic, political, visible church, have officers ruling, and so are political; and if all the parts do thus consist of officers ruling, and others governed, so must the whole consisting of those parts, have officers, and so be political: Yea, 3. In regard that the particular officers of particular churches, tho' actually they be limited unto these particular churches; yet they may be said to be officers to the universal visible church, because habitually their office extendeth to the whole, and *pro re nata*, and as the occasion offereth, they may execute their power, even in other places than where they are fixed; and fixedly exercising their office, for the more commodiously edifying of that part of the Lord's body; for here this body is said to have *members*, and members are set in the body, and the body because of them said to be organical. See 1 Cor. xii. 12. to 28.

IV. This one body and church, beside the officers, because of whom it is called organical, consisteth not only of such as truly and sincerely believe in Christ and are united unto him by faith, as members of his mystical body, but also of such as profess faith in Christ, tho' void of any real saving grace; for he says, *We are one body*,

body, taking in the Romans, among whom questionless there were many strangers to any real work of grace upon their heart: He is speaking of the visible church, or of Christ's visible body, and so the members thereof must be visible; and visible members are such as are professing Christ: I say, he is speaking of the church as visible, for he is speaking of that church which is organical, having officers in it, and this must certainly be a visible church.

V. Tho' there be great difference among the members of this body, some being rulers, some ruled, 1 Cor. xii. 17. 19. some real believers, some only professors; some young, and some old in grace, 1 John ii. 12. 13. 14. 1 Tim. iii. 6. some weak and some strong, Heb. v. 11. 12. 13. and vi. 1. Rom. iv. 20. and xiv. 1. 2. 21. yet all of them make up one political visible body, and are one as to this; having all one God, Eph. iv. 6. one head Christ, Eph. i. 21. 22. Col. i. 18. one author of grace and gifts, 1 Cor. xii. 4. one covenant tendered, and one way of entering into this body; one baptism, a seal of this one covenant, Eph. iv. 5.: *So we being many are one body.*

VI. As Christ is a head in a special, saving and spiritual manner, unto all such as are real believers and members of his mystical body, communicating unto such, spiritual and saving influences, that they may grow up in him; so this visible political body hath a head, and is united in one body, under none but Christ, who hath all power given him, Mat. xxviii. 18. and the government laid upon his shoulder, Isa. xxii. 22. and ix. 6. and by virtue thereof is the only lawgiver of his church, James iv. 12. Isa. xxxiii. 22. and sendeth forth his under officers to rule under him, Mat. xxviii. 19. and xvi. 19. whose injunctions these officers must obey and follow, and no others, were they even apostles, 1 Cor. xi. 23. Acts xv. 13. to 19.: *So we being many are one body in Christ*; that is, one body under this one head Christ: In respect of this one head, they are all one body;

hence it is his stile to be called the head of the church, Eph. i. 22. 23. and v. 23. Col. i. 18. and ii. 18. 19.

VII. Howbeit carnal, corrupt livers do look upon the office of the ministry, and officers of God's house, as altogether useless, and so wish the land were quit of them; yet they are of absolute necessity unto the standing of a visible politic church, being essential constituent members thereof, so that when they are gone, the church thus considered, must be dissolved and return to ashes; therefore they are compared to the members of the body, which the body cannot want, otherways it should become a dead trunk: *For as we have many members in one body;---so every one are members one of another.* See Eph. iv. 11. 12. 13.

VIII. Tho' there be several particular duties, which private Christians are called to, both in reference to one another, and all of them in reference to their officers and overseers, Heb. xiii. 7. 17. 1 Thess. v. 12. 13. yet none of these ought to assume unto themselves any of these offices which belong unto the officers of the house of God, but ought to keep them in their own stations; *all members have not the same office, action or operation.*

IX. Tho' every member of the politic body of Christ, or of the visible church, have not the same office and employment; yet it is the duty of every one so to carry themselves in their places and stations, as they may most edify the whole body; and in their carriage they ought to have some respect unto the edification of the whole body; for it is said, *and every one members one of another.*

X. God, in the depth of his wisdom, has so contrived the frame of the government and constitution of his house, as the meanest officer may not, nor should not, be slighted and undervalued, and the meanest member may not be without some employment, but, being faithful in the stations God has placed them in, may be useful and profitable to the whole; therefore,

says he, *Every one is members one of another.*

XI. The right consideration of this, that the Lord has placed and ordained several offices and officers in his church, and has so framed matters as that every one may employ their talent usefully, for the glory of God, and the good of others, should move every one, however they be endued, to act within their own sphere, and to discharge their duty in humility, modesty, and sobriety; for this is the force of the apostle's argument to press a sober walking; *for as we have many members, &c.*

VERSES 6. 7. 8. *Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith:*

Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or be that teacheth, on teaching;

Or be that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

FOR the further illustration of the former argument, the apostle in these verses, doth enumerate the several ministerial ordinary officers, which are the main organs and members of this organical body, the visible political church of Christ, with their several functions, and acts of their peculiar and particular offices; and withal points forth the manner and way of their discharging their duties in their callings, that, by this means, every officer in God's house, might know how to lay forth the gifts and abilities wherewith God hath endued them, to the edification of the whole church, and of every member of that church, and so might learn to walk soberly and self-deniedly; and for this cause he brancheth out the several officers in Christ's house, that is, *the grace that is given to them*, according to which the gifts or qualifications furnishing them for the discharge of the duties of their office, doth differ:

for he says, *Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us*; and this he doth first in two generals, viz. 1st, *Prophecy*; by which is not meant that extraordinary gift of foretelling things to come, which is commonly called *prophecy*; nor is this word so to be taken, as including these extraordinary officers who were called prophets, of whom we read, 1 Cor. xii. 28. for he is speaking only of the ordinary standing officers of Christ's house; but by *prophecy* he meaneth such officers or graces, as are employed about the interpreting of scripture, and the clearing and explaining of the mind of God, for the saving illumination and conviction of people, and for the gaining them in to Christ: And then, 2^{dly}, *Ministry*, which must be understood as distinct from *prophecy*; and so as including these officers in the church, which are taken up with more inferior and subservient employments; and to these two generals he annexeth their specific actions, or the distinct employments of these officers, in other two general terms, and withal addeth his exhortation to the right manner of going about these employments; and so, 1. he says, *Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith*: that is, Let us give out ourselves to the uttermost of our knowledge in the mysteries of God; according to the measure of knowledge of these divine mysteries, so let us lay out ourselves. And, 2. *Let us wait on our ministering*; Let us be addicted and given to it, as existing in it as it were. Then after he has spoken to these ordinary church officers in general, he descends unto the particular offices, and reckoneth up the four ordinary standing church-officers, viz. *doctors, pastors, elders*; and *deacons*, giving them, (1.) their several names, as, *he that teacheth, he that exhorteth, he that giveth and sheweth mercy*, (by both these he meaneth one and the same officer, and addeth the last the more to clear the first, and shew that by him that giveth he meaneth the deacon, who is to have a care of the weak, sick, and

and poor, on whom mercy is to be extended) and *he that ruleth*. (2.) Giving them their peculiar and distinct operations, and withal pressing them to the most edifying way of discharging their duties: As, 1. Teachers should be about teaching; this is his employment, and he should wait on it, or be sedulous and painful in it. 2. He that exhorteth must *wait on exhortation*; that is his exercise, and in this exercise must he attend constantly. 3. He that giveth and sheweth mercy, must do it with *simplicity* and *cheerfulness*; simplicity, that is, without self-respects and by-ends, from a desire to do good and shew mercy, and for this cause to give not sparingly, but liberally; and *cheerfulness*, that is, without grudging and inward fretting, heartily and willingly; and then, he that ruleth, must be about this work *with diligence*.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It hath seemed good in our Lord's eyes, who is the master of his own house, to appoint not one kind of office, but, for the further decorating and beautifying of his house, hath appointed several distinct offices; for here, the apostle reckoneth up four distinct offices, for he is speaking of members having office, ver. 4. and so of distinct persons about distinct employments.

II. In the more orderly procedure in the administrations of affairs in his house, the Lord hath appointed to every office its proper function and operation, that nothing might be done in confusion in the house of God, who is the God of order; for the *deacon* must be employed in *giving* and distributing to the poor, &c. the *elder* must be employed only in *ruling*, and about matters of jurisdiction; the pastor and the doctor, beside what they do conjunctly with elders and deacons, as superior officers, must attend *teaching* and *exhortation*, which the rest may not meddle with.

III. The meanest office of the house of God cannot be discharged by every one,

but requireth, for the right discharge of the duties belonging thereto, gifts and qualifications; *having then gifts*, says he, *differing according to the grace that is given to us*, &c.

IV. Tho' gifts be necessary for the discharging of duties belonging to such and such offices, yet every one who is endued with these gifts, may not, upon that score, intrude himself into such or such an office, and take upon him to do the duties belonging to such an office, but must act in his own sphere; for besides gifts, there must be grace given: *Having gifts, according to the grace that is given to us*.

V. As the gifts wherewith the Lord endueth any, are freely and undeservedly given; so the Lord's putting any into an office, tho' the meanest in his church, is an act of honour and respect, and that also freely bestowed; therefore it is called a grace, and a grace given: *According to the grace that is given to us*.

VI. So desirous is the Lord to have the saving knowledge of his name abounding, that poor ignorant persons might know the way to him, and to everlasting life, that he has appointed peculiar officers for the unfolding and explaining of his mind set down in his word unto them; this is it which is meant by *prophecy*.

VII. God, who is the wise dispenser of his own gifts, hath thought fit not to bestow on each of these whom he employeth in the clearing and expounding of his mind, the same degree of knowledge and abilities, but to some more, and to others less; to some a greater gift of sound expounding of the word, for the information of the judgments of people; to others, a greater gift of application and working upon the affections; therefore we hear of *a proportion of faith*, each have their own measure.

VIII. Tho' every one hath not the same gifts, nor the same measure of them, which others have; yet every one who is employed in the work of the ministry, ought to

lay forth himself unto the utmost of his power and ability; they should *prophecy according to the proportion of faith*.

IX. Tho' such as God employeth in the work of prophecy, may also take upon them the work of the ministry, and discharge the duties thereof (the superior order always including the inferior) and so may have a care of the poor, and see to the distribution of the goods belonging to the poor, and also have a special hand in the acts of discipline and jurisdiction, as is undeniable and clearly proven by several passages of Scripture, as Acts xv. Matth. xvi. 19. and xviii. 18. Acts xx. 28. 1 Cor. v. 1 Tim. v. 12. Heb. xiii. 7. 17.; yet the Lord, who is merciful and wise, will not have his servants overburdened and diverted from what is their main task and work, but hath therefore appointed other officers to be helpful and subservient to them, and so to take a lift of their burden; and therefore there are officers of the *ministry* appointed. See Acts vi. 3. 4. 5. 1 Tim. v. 17.

X. Tho' such as are appointed to ministering, that is, the ruler and the giver, are not wholly taken up with the duties belonging to that office, but may discharge the same, and yet wait upon their calling and employment in a world; yet they ought to make such conscience of the discharge of that church office wherein they are set, as to neglect no part thereof, but seriously to mind the same, as if they had nothing else to do; such are to *be in their ministry*, or to wait on their ministry.

XI. As the Lord doth sometimes so distribute his gifts, as one excelleth in clearing a text, proposing sound doctrine, acutely convincing of error, and another hath the dexterity in directing of people in point of practice, and winning in upon their affections, and the church standeth in need of both of these; so the Lord hath thought fit to appoint several officers for both, as doctors or teachers to inform the judgment, and pastors and exhorters to

gain ground upon the affections; tho' in our church as yet, by reason of poverty, and of God's goodness in enduing his servants with a competent measure of gifts for both these offices, every particular congregation cannot win to both, but the ordinary office of the doctor or teacher is confined to the schools; for there is mention made of *him that teacheth*, and of *him that exhorteth*. See Eph. iv. 11.

XII. Tho' many look upon this teaching and exhorting as a light business; yet it is such a work as will take up a man wholly; and such as would faithfully discharge their duty herein, should make it their whole task and employment, yea, and their very element, to be about the exercise of teaching and exhorting: Such as are *teachers*, should be *waiting on*, or in their work of *teaching*; and such as are *exhorters*, should be *waiting on* their work of *exhortation*.

XIII. There is such an officer in the house of God, by divine appointment, as a deacon, to have care of the poor, sick, and old, and to distribute the churches bounty; for so is their charity called, 1 Cor. xvi. 3. and this speaketh out much of God's wonderful wisdom and kindness; for here there is an officer who is called a *giver*, or a *bestower of mercy*: See Acts vi. 3. 4. 5. where their first institution is, and 1 Tim. iii. 8. &c. where their qualifications are set down. See also, Philip i. 1.

XIV. Altho' at the first institution of these deacons it was requisite they should be men full of the Holy Ghost, Acts vi. 39. (that being to be a rule for all time coming, and there being abundance of such to be had,) and tho' it be true, that the first deacons were set apart with imposition of hands, which was nothing but a sign of the apostles praying over them, and no ways like the ordination of preaching elders, mentioned Acts xiii. 3. 4. and xiv. 23.; and tho' it be true, that he must *hold the mystery of the faith*, 1 Tim. iii. 9. which is not for preaching of sound doctrine,

trine, but for stedfastness in a blameless conversation; yet this deacon must not take upon him to preach, and so do the office of a pastor or doctor; for he is a distinct officer from teacher and pastor, and is distinctly named, *he that giveth*, and *he that sheweth mercy*. Stephen's sermon, Acts vii. was but an apology of a private Christian; and Philip, it is true, preached, but he was an evangelist, Acts xxi. 8.

XV. Neither may this deacon take upon him any part of the office of the elder, he must not rule, tho' it be required of him that he *rule his own house well*, 1 Tim. iii. 12. for that is but to shew, that he must be one fit to take care of the houses of the poor; for he is distinct also from the ruler here mentioned, so that *he who giveth*, and *he who ruleth*, are two different officers in God's house.

XVI. All the employment which this deacon is called to, is to have a care of the poor, weak and sick, and to distribute the churches charity according to their necessities; and thus must he serve tables, Acts vi. 2. as to help the widows who were neglected in the daily ministration, and not administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper, tho' he may there carry the cup and the elements, or do such like; for this is peculiar to the pastor, and he is different from them, as we shewed, Doct. Observ. XIV. for here he is called *one that sheweth mercy*; to shew, that his work and employment is about the poor, needy, weak ones, who are the objects of mercy.

XVII. This deacon must not think it enough to distribute the churches charity unto the indigent, but he must see that he do it with Christian simplicity of heart, without feud or favour, or deceitfulness, as eyeing their good; and he must do it with cheerfulness, not grudging or repining at the employment, but rather rejoicing that he is so employed: *He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; and he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness*.

XVIII. Beside the pastor, doctor, and

deacon, mentioned, there is another standing officer in Christ's house, distinct from these, whose office is to rule, and this is he who is called the ruling elder, 1 Tim. v. 17. for there is here an officer who is said to *rule*, and the word in the original points forth properly government, either in a family, 1 Tim. iii. 4. 5. 12. or in the church, 1 Thess. v. 12. 1 Tim. v. 17. and by this ruler none else can be meant but our ruling elder; for thereby the magistrate cannot be meant, for as such he is no church officer, of which only the apostle is speaking, and at that time there was no Christian magistrate; nor can the prelate or bishop be hereby understood, for this officer is one of these who is under the general title of ministry, and so is one of these officers who are appointed as subservient unto the pastor and the doctor, of which the bishop is none: There is an officer who is called, *he that ruleth*.

XIX. Tho' the pastor and doctor have a power of jurisdiction and government in the house of God, which is also the work and employment of this ruling elder; yet this ruling elder is a distinct officer from them, because he is not to meddle with the duties belonging to their office, but only is to be helpful and subservient to them in the point of exercise of government; the specific act of his office is to govern; and to do no more: his characteristic distinguishing mark is this, that he is one that *ruleth*, and therefore is called *governments*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. 29.

XX. This ruling elder is bound to take a list of this governing part, and not to slight the same, but to be careful, painful, sedulous and constantly exercised therein; they should *rule with diligence*.

XXI. Christ has manifested much of his tenderness towards his church, in that he would not burden her with a multitude of officers, and much of his love, in that he would so appoint these few as might serve for all their necessities; and therefore we have mention made only here of four distinct

strict officers, and these helpful both for their spiritual and temporal condition: and beside these we are to acknowledge no officer authorized by Christ in his house; so that the pope, cardinals, patriarchs, primates, metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops, as distinct, whether in order or degree, from the highest of these mentioned here, are but creatures of man's invention: for here the apostle is reckoning up all the ordinary standing officers of Christ's house, and he mentions all such officers as are ready to think of themselves otherways than cometh sobriety, and have need to be directed how to employ their gifts for the edification of the body of Christ; and none of these are here mentioned, except they be understood by pastors or doctors, and then they cannot be distinct from them, either in order or degree, and there is not a superior order, nor a superior degree of officers in the house of God now, after the extraordinary officers are ceased, than pastors and doctors. See all such excluded in other places, Eph. iv. 11. 12. *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers,* &c. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 29.

VERSES 9. 10. 11. *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.*

Be kindly affectioned one to another; with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another:

Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

IN this last part of the chapter, the apostle is pressing upon all Christians, in whatsoever station, several particular duties; and in these verses he is laying forth some duties in clear, short and pathetic aphorisms: And 1. He would have their love to their neighbour without guile or hypocrisy. 2. He would have them abhorring, loathing, and abominating every sinful thing, as hell itself. 3. He would

have them cleaving to that which is good, as glewed or married to it. 4. He would have their love, (1.) brotherly; as cometh brethren: And, (2.) He would have this brotherly love flowing natively and kindly; in this brotherly love he would have them kindly affectioned, and that to one another. 5. He would have them preferring one another in honour, thinking soberly and modestly of themselves. 6. He would not have them lazy, backward and slothful to any duty of their callings in a world. 7. But withal would have them exercising themselves in their callings, as they may not abate their fervour and spirit in their religious duties. 8. He would have them in all their duties, whether in their christian or in their particular duties, eyeing the Lord, and doing all as service to him as their master and commander.

From verse 9. **OBSERVE,**

I. True christian love is a notable mean to help Christians to the conscientious discharge of all their duties towards their neighbour; like oyl it makes all the rest of the wheels to go, and so is called *the fulfilling of the law*, Rom. xiii. 10. Gal. v. 14. and therefore it is here put in the first place.

II. This true christian love must be *unfeigned*, 2 Cor. vi. 6. 1 Pet. i. 22. having *sincerity* in it, 2 Cor. viii. 8. wrought out by *faith*, Gal. v. 6. flowing from holy principles, even from a *pure unbiassed heart*, 1 Pet. i. 22. *kything in word and deed*, 1 John iii. 18. 1 Theff. i. 3. Heb. vi. 10.: *Let love be without dissimulation.*

III. This true sincere christian love to our neighbour, may well consist with a refusing to comply with him in his sinful courses; and the more truly and sincerely we love him, the more will we testify our displeasure at his sinful ways: Immediately after he says, *Let love be without dissimulation*, he presently subjoins, *abhor that which is evil*. See Lev. xix. 17.

IV. It is the duty of all Christians, to be

be so abandoning every evil way, be it less or more, as *never* to come in terms with it; they should hate, abhor and detest it, and their very souls should shudder at it as most vile, loathsome and noisome: They should *abhor that which is evil*.

V. Tho' Christians who would live godly, must suffer persecution, and must look for discouragements in their way; yet it is their duty, notwithstanding of all these difficulties, oppositions, contrary blasts and temptations, to be constantly enduring and continuing in the exercise of good, as being glewed to it so firmly, as no blast can make a divorce or separation: They should *cleave to that which is good*.

VI. As it is not sufficient for people to be abstaining from what is sinful and abominable, but they must likewise be setting about the doing of good, Isa. i. 16. 17. so where there is a true, hearty, thorough soul-detestation of what is evil, there will be a sincere desire, a true love, and ardent adherence unto what is good: These go together, *Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good*.

From verse 10. OBSERVE,

I. Where this love is truly christian, as it will be ardent and strong, as is the love among brethren; so will it be rightly terminated, *viz.* on Christians, as brethren, partakers of the same divine nature with themselves, having the same seed of the same Father within them, the same grace, and image of the same Father, and a right to the same inheritance; it will be set upon them as such, and under that notion and relation, and therefore will be a love of all the saints, Col. i. 4. 1 John iii. 14. wherefore it is called *brotherly love*. See 1 Thess. iv. 9. Heb. xiii. 1. 2 Pet. i. 2.

II. This brotherly love should stir in Christians natively and kindly, and should not be blocked up with wrongs real or supposed; but, like the natural affection and bowels of parents towards children, it should flow constantly, and with a natural

kindly propension: They should *be kindly affectioned in brotherly love*.

III. Where this kindly affectionedness is working, there will be a low estimation of ourselves, or of what is in us, and a high estimation of others, and a prizing of their worth and virtue, so as to prefer them in our esteem, and to shew all the respects of honour unto them; for it is added, *In honour preferring one another*.

From verse 11. OBSERVE,

I. As Christianity doth not loose folk from following their lawful and necessary callings in a world; so it is the will of the Lord, that Christians be diligent and careful, even in going about the duties of their ordinary calling; *Not slothful in business*. See Prov. xxvi. 13.

II. Christians should so go about the duties of their calling, as they may not thereby cool or abate their zeal in duties of religion; the one should not justify out the other, but be done in subserviency thereto; and so as may most promote and further the matters of everlasting concernment; for it is added, *Fervent in spirit*.

III. It is not enough for believers to be discharging the duties of their christian calling, but they ought to go about them in a zealous, active, lively manner, as lively Christians, acted by the Spirit of God: They should be *fervent in spirit*. See Luke i. 17. Acts xiv. 14. 15. John ii. 14. 15. 16.

IV. In all our duties, both of our christian and of our particular callings, we should so carry ourselves as faithful servants of the Lord, not seeking ourselves, but eyeing his glory and honour; and true zeal is always levelling at the honour and glory of God; for so it is added, *Serving the Lord*.

VERSES 12. 13. 14. 15. *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.*

Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Bless

Bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

IN these verses he lays before them some other duties, more nearly relating unto a time of affliction: And these duties are of three sorts; *first*, Some touching themselves in that time. *Secondly*, Some touching others, verses 13, 15. And *thirdly*, Some concerning the instruments of their affliction, ver. 14. *First*, As for themselves, he would have them, 1. rejoicing in hope of a happy outgate in due time. 2. Patient under the saddest of dispensations, till the Lord send a better. And, 3. In the mean time taken up with fervent, serious and important prayer. *Secondly*, As to others, he would have them, 1. distributing out of their own substance, according to their power, unto the indigent straitened saints. And, 2. ready to give shelter and accommodation unto poor exiled saints. 3. He would have them in a kindly warm manner sympathizing with their brethren, and taking a share of their lot, be it better or worse. *Thirdly*, As to their persecutors, he would have them indeed blessing, and wishing well unto them.

From verse 12. OBSERVE,

I. Let the storm which lieth upon the godly be never so great and terrible, the Lord alloweth his people to hope for an outgate, and of being bettered by that dispensation in the end: *Rejoicing in hope.*

II. As at all times the Lord alloweth his children a rejoicing life, Phil. iv. 4. 1 Thess. v. 6. so especially in a day of sad affliction, it becometh the godly to be merry and to rejoice, that others may see what a noble Master they serve: *Rejoice in hope.* See 2 Cor. vii. 4.

III. As believers have many grounds of rejoicing in a hard time; so, among others, the hope of an outgate may bear up their heads, and keep them from being over-

come with discouragement; and when hope is rightly exercised, it will make the soul sing in the midst of a prison: *Rejoicing in hope.*

IV. Believers, and all who will live godly in this present world, must resolve upon a life of sufferings and afflictions, and expect the worst, even griping, pinching and straitening troubles; they must look for tribulation: *Patient in tribulation.* See Rom. v. 3. and viii. 35. 2 Cor. i. 4. 1 Thess. iii. 4.

V. Whatever be the straits, difficulties and troubles which believers are meeting with, they ought not to fret, grudge or repine thereat, but should humbly submit, and patiently endure the worst that man can do; and the lively exercise of hope, will teach a soul silent submission and humble patience under the dispensation: *Patient in tribulation.*

VI. This patient submission under an affliction is no way inconsistent with, but rather a notable help to a diligent wrestling with God for a delivery; and be the trouble what it will, it should never drive a soul further from the Lord, but rather be a spur in his side to push him forward to earnestness in his addresses to the Lord; for it is added, *Continuing instant in prayer.* See Psal. l. 15. James i. 5.

VII. Howbeit God's children may put up many petitions unto the Lord in a time of affliction, and yet receive no sensible return; and may meet with several other discouragements, which may make them weary and faint, Psal. vi. 6. and lxix. 3. yet it is their duty to be keeping their heart always in a praying frame and disposition, and laying hold on all occasions to call upon the Lord, and resolving to give him no rest until he shew mercy, Psal. cxxiii. 1. 2.; they should *continue instant in prayer*, as dogs are upon the pursuit, and to follow this course earnestly and assiduously. See Col. iv. 2. Luke xviii. 1. 1 Thess. v. 17.

From verse 13. OBSERVE,

I. The only wise God hath thought good to order things so in a world, as that his own chosen ones, his precious jewels, shall have a hampered poor life in a world, for the most part, full of straits and necessities: we hear of *the necessities of the saints*. See Rom. xv. 26.

II. Tho' there be none of God's children that can promise to themselves wealth and prosperity in the world, and freedom from that common lot of poverty and want, which other meet with; yet the infinitely wise God, who is most careful and tender of his own, hath, in his deep wisdom, so ordered matters, as that they shall not be all alike exercised with that dispensation, but there shall be some left in a capacity to help and relieve others; there are some to whom this direction is given, *viz.* that they should *distribute to the necessities of the saints*. See Heb. xiii. 16. 2 Cor. ix. 2. 3. and viii. 14.

III. As it is the duty of Christians to be liberal and bountiful unto all in distress, and especially the saints, who are *the household of faith*, Gal. vi. 10. that thereby they may evidence their love to Christ, Matth. xxv. 35. 36. 37.; so the right consideration that these in distress are saints, beloved of God and dear to Christ, should endear them to us, and make us willing to lay out of our substance for their relief; and therefore he calls them saints, *distributing to the necessities of the saints*.

IV. This liberality and munificence should be with *forwardness*, 2 Cor. ix. 2. with *bountifulness*, 2 Cor. ix. 6. not with grudging, or of necessity, verse 7. but cheerfully, heartily, and affectionately, as sympathizing with them in their straits, and as looking upon them as having some right to share with them in their fulness, and to be made partakers thereof; they should give out of their substance as if it were a common stock-purse, and themselves but stewards, for so the word imports: *Distributing to the necessities of the saints*.

See Heb. xiii. 2. 1 Tim. vi. 18. 2 Cor. viii. and ix. chapters.

V. The precious people of God may some of them be brought to that pass, as not to have a house to shelter themselves in, but be forced to wander in deserts, and among strangers, as exiles, needing *hospitality*. See Heb. xi. 38.

VI. Christians that have the benefit of their dwelling-houses, when others of the dear saints of Christ are banished from house and harbour, should be most ready to entertain such, yea, and follow this course with earnestness, pressing this courtesy upon such as are modest, as Abraham, Gen. xviii. and Lot, Gen. xix.: he would have them *given to hospitality*; that is, following it with eagerness of affection, and earnestness of spirit.

From verse 14. OBSERVE,

I. However the persecutors of God's people be using much cruelty and savage barbarity towards them, yet it is the duty of the children of God to be carrying christianly towards them, wishing well to them, and praying to God for them, not knowing but there may be some of the elect among them: *Bless them which persecute you*. See Matth. v. 43. 44. 46. Acts vii. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 22. Luke vi. 27. 35.

II. As this duty is cross the hair, and contrary to flesh and blood, and so a matter of great difficulty to win to; so honest believers, who would look like Christians indeed, should study so much the more to reach this duty, and set the more earnestly about it, and look upon it as most necessary; therefore is the exhortation doubled, *Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not*.

III. Christians do not enough when they abstain from imprecations, upon their own private account, but positively they must be wishing good to their persecutors, and that really and sincerely from the very heart: *Bless, and curse not*.

From verse 15. OBSERVE,

I. Tho' in the saddest of crosses believers ought not to cast down their hearts, in a faithless and hopeless despondency of spirit; yet in the day when the Lord is pleased to smile upon them in his dispensations, and to send them prosperity when others are strangers to it, they should not be unsensible of this, but ought to be much affected with it, and to testify the same by their christian joy and alacrity: *Rejoice with them that do rejoice.*

II. When God is pleased to afflict his people with sad and bitter dispensations, tho' he allow them not to sorrow as such as have no hope, yet he alloweth a moderate sorrow, and would not have them like so many stocks that had no sense at all: *Weep with them that weep.*

III. So far ought Christians to be from that envious disposition which is set to grudge at, and envy the prosperity of others, and from that cruel and tyrannous disposition which is set to rejoice at the hurt and adversity of others, that, on the contrary, they should look like members of the same body, and so share with others in their good or in their ill condition; help forward their joy who are in a fit of rejoicing, and take a list of their sad condition who are weeping: *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

VERSE 16. *Be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*

IN this verse the apostle is pressing some more duties upon Christians; and more particularly he is pressing such duties as concern their converse with other church members: Of these there are four in whole; the three last whereof may be considered as means to the first and main duty. 1. *Be of the same mind one towards another*; that is, I would have you falling

about christian concord, harmony, and unanimity, that you may live together as brethren, having natural affection, and heart-warmness to each other, and being of the same judgment, without discord; for this expression is explained by Paul writing to the Philippians, as taking in both harmony in judgment and concord in affection, Phil. ii. 2. 2. *And mind not high things*; that is, Be not puffed up with a conceit of your own parts and abilities; be not proud and conceited; set not your heart and mind on things too far beyond your reach, and beyond your calling, for that will mar christian concord. 3. *Condescend to men of low estate*; that is, Misken not, undervalue not, despise not the weak and mean gifts and abilities of others of your neighbours, but stoop low and submit to the edification of the meanest member of the church; yield and submit unto them, and be, as it were, led away with them, (for so the word importeth) otherways you shall mar christian concord. 4. *Be not wise in your own conceits*; that is, Be not addicted to your own opinions, and so self-conceited as to cede and yield in nothing; but have mean and modest thoughts of yourselves, according to Prov. iii. 7. Isa. v. 21. and this will help much to a christian agreement.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' Satan be busy to cast the seed of discord amongst brethren, and division upon diversity of judgment; yet it is Christians duty, and a duty which well becometh them, to be labouring after unity in affection and judgment, to be shunning discord, dissention, or diversity of judgment, or yet alienation of affection: he would have them *of the same mind one towards another*. See Phil. ii. 2. iii. 16. and iv. 2.

II. As a lofty, arrogant, proud, aspiring spirit, being not content with our own state and condition, is altogether unbeseeming a Christian, who ought to follow his Master

Master in humility; so it is an enemy unto christian concord and joining together in heart and judgment, which is the badge of a Christian: for next he says, *Mind not high things.*

III. It is utterly unbecoming Christians to be so puffed up with a conceit of their own transcendent worth, as to condemn others of lesser parts and abilities, and undervalue them so as not to keep sweet and loving correspondence with them, for their strengthening and encouragement, nor to use any condescendency towards them because of their weakness in grace and knowledge: he would have them *condescending to men of low estate.* See 1 Cor. ix. 22. 1 Thess. v. 14.

IV. It becometh Christians, considering from whom they have all that they have, and how they know but in part, to have but low thoughts of their own abilities, and not to be so self-conceited as to be overweaned with their own knowledge, and the conceits of their own worth; and a man who keepeth up low thoughts of his own knowledge and parts, is a fit man for christian concord and harmony: for to help forward this oneness of mind, he exhorts them *not to be wise in their own conceits.*

VERSES 17. 18. *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

IN these two verse the apostle is pressing them to some general duties, both towards such as are within, and such as are without the church: As, 1. *Recompense no man evil for evil;* he would not have such as are private persons retaliating any, whether a church member or not, for any offence done them. 2. *Provide things honest in the sight of all men:* He would have them seriously and honestly procuring and providing for such things in their daily walk, as may justly give none offence;

such things as not only are lawful, but also suitable, decent, and bebecoming them in their places and stations, that neither Jew nor Gentile, a Christian nor a stranger, may stumble. 3. *If it be possible, &c.* that is, he would have them by all means studying a peaceable walking with one and other.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' a Christian should carry himself never so humbly and condescendingly among his fellow brethren; yet such is the strength of corruption in the best, and the restless maliciousness of Satan, who is still blowing at the coal of strife and dissension, that they must expect ill turns even at the hands of their fellow Christians: for upon the back of the former exhortations he addeth this, *Recompense no man evil for evil;* and so supposeth, that notwithstanding of their following the former exhortations, they will meet with evil.

II. Be the evil what it will, which Christians meet with, and at the hands of whomsoever, friends or foes, they ought to stand out against their corruptions, which are ready to prompt to a private revenge and requital, and forbear this unchristian retaliation; for however men, led by an evil spirit, count it their glory not to sit with a wrong, but to be fit-side with any who injure them; yet it is a most unchristian thing, and unbecoming the followers of Christ: *Recompense to no man evil for evil.* 1 Pet. iii. 9. Prov. xxiii. 2. Matth. v. 39. 1 Thess. v. 15.

III. As Christians ought not to be proud and vain in their carriage, so neither ought they to be scurrile and base in their behaviour, but ought to carry themselves honestly, studying such a way of walking as may not scar any, or stumble them, but be most gaining, as being most suitable for their places and stations: they should *provide for things honest.* See 2 Cor. viii. 21.

IV. Christians in their carriage should so behave themselves, as not only they may not give offence unto their fellow Chri-

stians, but in their deportment they should even have respect unto strangers, and provide, as to their externals, what may not justly fear and stumble them: *Provide for things honest in the sight of all men.* 2 Cor. viii. 21. Matth. v. 16.

V. It is unseemly for Christians to be quarrelsome and keeping up debates among themselves; and not only so, but also it is unbecoming Christians, and most stumbling for them, to be striving and contending even with the wicked ones and strangers to Christ: they should *live peaceably with all men.*

VI. Such is the wicked malicious disposition of some, being the kindly seed of the serpent, as that they will never suffer the godly to live in rest and peace, do what they can; and therefore the apostle casts in this clause, *If it be possible, live peaceably with all men.*

VII. However there be great difficulty to win over our own corruptions, to join in peace with others, and in some respect impossible to win to peace and quietness with some; yet nevertheless it is the duty of Christians to be seriously and earnestly setting about all means possible or imaginable for attaining peace, what by condescending and forgiving injuries received, what by recompensing good for evil, 1 Pet. iii. 9. 11. he must do what in him lieth: *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.* See 1 Pet. iii. 11. Heb. xii. 14.

VIII. In our pursuing after peace with others, we ought not to condescend unto sinful, dishonourable, or dishonest terms, but even in our pursuit after peace, we should have a care that our deportment be honest as becometh a Christian; for these two duties may and should be minded together, *Provide things honest in the sight of all men; and if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

VERSES 19. 20. 21. *Dearly beloved; avenge not yourselves, but rather give*

place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord.

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

IN the last place, he is pressing a duty which he had touched before, ver. 17. and because there is great difficulty, to get it rightly gone about, therefore he comes over it again, and now presseth it most earnestly. The duty in a word is this, That whatever injuries we get done by others, we should in no way study any private revenge; but rather refer them to the Judge of all, and for our part to be doing all the good we can to them, in straits and difficulties: *Avenge not yourselves; tho' you may lawfully defend yourselves from your enemies, yet when you are wronged, seek not a recompence, at your own hand: But rather give place unto wrath; that is, Rather let God take vengeance on him; take not God's place, but give way to his wrath.* The arguments enforcing this, are these two, 1. in that kindly warm appellation, *Dearly beloved;* It is love in me that moves me to lay this duty before you, and as you would evidence yourselves to be such, mind this duty. 2. He brings a testimony out of Deut. xxxii. 35. where the Lord challengeth vengeance to be his prerogative royal. Then he sets down the other part of the exhortation, ver. 20. cited out of Prov. xxv. 22. *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him, &c.* that is, If thine enemy be in any strait whatever, relieve him, and relieve him not sparingly but liberally and cheerfully, or tenderly and lovingly, as nurses do feed their young or sick children (for so the word importeth) with the reason, *For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire, &c.* that is, Thy courteous and kind acts towards

wards him who is thine enemy, shall melt his hard and frozen heart, and make him fall from his cruelty and melt to thy hand, (if there be any ingenuity in him) and to do kindness to thee, or cease at least from his anger, which he once intended not to have done; this seemeth to be the purport of this proverbial speech, as the following words, ver. 21. cleareth: *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*; Let not the evil deeds of others to thee stir up thy passion and desire of revenge, and so thou be overcome by Satan and thine own corruption, but overcome the evil disposition and wicked temper of thine enemies, and win them to love thee by thy good deeds and acts of bounty and good will.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. So strong is corruption, pride and self-conceit, even in the best, that they can hardly be moved and prevailed with to suppress the evil spirit of revenge which is in them, and is ready to stir and break forth when they are injured, therefore doth the apostle come over this again, and press it more pathetically, with a *dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves*.

II. As ministers should be loving and tender in every piece of their duty; so especially should they evidence love and tenderness towards their flock, when they are pressing upon them duties that their natural stomachs stand against, that being thus pressed they may be the better welcomed; therefore when he is thus pressing this duty he ushereth it in with a *dearly beloved*.

III. Tho' private Christians may lawfully defend themselves from injuries and wrongs, and may seek in a legal, lawful manner, from the hands of God's vicegerents upon earth, a redress, providing it be done in a christian sober manner; yet it is utterly unlawful for such to be avenging themselves at their own hand, or to be

seeking a legal redress out of a spirit of revenge: *Avenge not yourselves*.

IV. It is the duty of Christians when they are wronged by any, to be giving over the matter unto the decision of the righteous judge, not out of any spirit given to revenge, but as a mean to lay the revengeful malicious spirit within themselves: *But rather give place unto wrath*. See 1 Pet ii. 23.

V. When a private person is following courses of revenge at his own hand, he is doing what lyeth within his power to stop the current of God's just wrath, and executing of justice against sinners; therefore it is said, *Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath*: as if their avenging of themselves, was a stopping of the way of God's wrath.

VI. As the word of God is the supreme judge and determiner of questions of controversy; so is it the rule whereby we ought to square our lives: It is the rule both of faith and manners, therefore he confirmeth this his exhortation with a *for it is written*.

VII. The righting of wrongs by executing of justice upon offenders, is a part of the prerogative-royal of him who is the righteous Judge of quick and dead; and whoever take upon them to right their own wrongs at their own hands, do encroach upon the honour and prerogative of the Most High: *For it is written. Vengeance is mine*. See Heb. x. 30.

VIII. The very fear of encroaching upon the Lord's prerogative, and of setting ourselves down upon his throne and judgment-seat, should deter all the people of God from avenging of themselves; and it is the want of the sense and apprehension of this, that makes people dare once to set about the avenging of themselves: *For it is written, Vengeance is mine*. See Deut. xxxii. 35.

IX. Tho' God's children should follow this exhortation, and forbear to avenge them-

themselves on such as have wronged them; yet such as wrong God's children, need not think to get away quite free, and so go on and injure the people of God without fear of punishment: *I will repay saith the Lord.* See Deut. xxxii. 36. &c.

X. The thought of this, that God will execute justice in his own time and manner upon such as wrong the people of God, should lay bands on them not to usurp and take God's place upon them, but to bear the wrongs done them in a Christian manner; for this is another argument to dissuade the godly from avenging themselves: *I will repay, saith the Lord.*

XI. Christians, who would shew and evidence themselves to be the followers of Christ, should be so far from avenging themselves, that, on the contrary, they should be ready and willing on all occasions to do kindness and courtesies unto their very enemies; this should make them look like Christ indeed, who did so: *Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him, &c.*

XII. True Christianity will teach men to be so self-denied, and so courteous, as to be bountiful to their very enemies; and not only to do them good for evil, but even to wait the fittest opportunity, when their necessity calleth most for help and relief, and their back being at the wall, they seeming to be in such a case as easily a man might avenge himself of them, and so be fit-side, and vent his heart; even then, in their straits, true Christianity will teach people to let out their bowels of compassion towards them, and that not in a sparing, nor yet in a dry and heartless manner, but in a large measure, with heartiness and good will: *If thine enemy hunger, feed him, &c.* even when he is

pinched with hunger and penury, then feast him, and deal lovingly and tenderly with him.

XIII. However men led by a carnal spirit, may think it lost labour to be feeding and satisfying the necessities of their enemies; yet it will prove a course much tending to their advantage, by procuring peace and amity, and a calming of the spirit of enmity, and moving them to become real friends, if they be not desperately wicked; and if so, God shall so much the more execute vengeance upon them; and the consideration of this advantage should move believers to be striving against their own corruption, and minding this duty; *For in so doing, thou shalt reap coals of fire on his head.*

XIV. However carnal and corrupt reason think it real stoutness, courage and valour for a man not to sit with a wrong at the hand of his neighbour, but to take vengeance at his own hand; yet really it is a course tending to enslave a man, and make the devil and his own corruption tread him under foot: *Be not overcome of evil, sayeth, that* when they are not passing quarrels, nor doing good to their very enemies, but following a course of revenge, they are then overcome, as so many slaves of evil.

XV. It is noble and Christian valour and gallantry, let blind man judge of it what he will, to be pardoning wrongs and shewing kindness to such as are wronging us; for thereby we overcome and master our own passions, and this is a victory indeed; and moreover we do much to lay their passions also, and lenify their wrath: *But overcome evil with good.*

CHAPTER XII.

IN this chapter the apostle presseth Christians further unto the duties of Christianity: As, first, unto duties incumbent on them as subjects, and as standing in a civil relation unto their superior magistrates and governors; and this he doth, 1. under a general expression of being *subject*, verse 1. and then, 2. in other four particulars, verses 6. 7. and in the rest of the verses he presseth that subjection with arguments. In the second part of the chapter, from verse 8. to verse 11. he presseth more particularly the duties of christian love. And, thirdly, he presseth them with arguments to a christian walk in the general.

VERSE 1. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God.*

THAT the apostle might lay before these Romans a complete map of directions, suiting Christians in all their relations, he, in the first part of this chapter, lays before them their duties political; suiting their state civil, as under the government of civil magistrates: And so, 1. he layeth down their duty in reference to the superior magistrates in general; *Be subject*, a general term, comprehending all the special duties called from subjects to their superior magistrates, and in a word it is, that they should walk as faithful honest subjects, being by the Lord, in the depth of his wisdom, put under others. 2. He holds forth the persons upon whom he presseth this duty, in these words, *every soul*, by a synecdoche for *every person*; and the apostle used this expression *soul*, to shew that the duties, such as obedience, &c. should be performed really, sincerely, and heartily, and that not only outwardly with the body, but also inwardly with the mind and soul; superiors should be regarded as such. 3. There are some arguments which

the apostle useth for the enforcing of this duty, as, First, In the description of the magistrates, calling them *higher powers*; that is, such as by lawful power and authority are set over them, and have a place above them; (1.) he calleth them *powers*, that is, such as have a just right and title to sovereignty or magistracy, for so the word in the original importeth a right and just title and interest, whether it be used of matters of public concernment, as John i. 12. Acts xvii. and v. 4. and viii. 19. Rom. ix. 21. 2 Thess. iii. 9. or of matters of public concernment or rule, Mat. xxviii. 18. Mark i. 27. Luke iv. 36. and xii. 5. and xix. 17. and xx. 20. John xvii. 2. and xix. 10. 1 Cor. xi. 20. and xv. 24. Col. ii. 10. Tit. iii. 1. Jude 25. and when it is used of matters of action, it importeth a warrant and a lawful commission, as Matth. ix. 6. and x. 1. and xxi. 23. Mark xiii. 34. Luke ix. 1. John x. 18. Acts xxvii. 12. 1 Cor. viii. 9. and ix. 4. 5. 6. 18. 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10. And then (2.) he calleth them *higher powers*; powers having superiority of command over us, having a moral excellency above us. The second argument is in these words, *For there is no power but of God*; and more fully and clearly set down in the following words,

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The powers that be, are ordained of God : The argument is taken from the original of the magistrate; all of them who are invested with the power of magistracy, (for he is not speaking of the supreme magistrate alone, but of all the inferior magistrates also; for, 1. He speaks of them in the plural number, verses 1. 2. 6. 2. Of all such as are *rulers*, verse 3. now this agreeth to others, Exod. xviii. 21. 22. 25. 26. 1 Chron. xii. 14. 3. It is clear from the duties laid upon the magistrate here, which elsewhere are laid upon inferior magistrates. And, 4. Parallel places clear this; see 1 Tim. ii. 1. 2. Tit. iii. 1, 1 Pet. ii. 13. 14 Prov. viii. 15. 16.) are approved, allowed and authorized by God, shewing his will in his word thereanent, and by his providence determining the general warrant and rule concerning magistrates unto that particular case, and so calling the person to the charge: and then more plainly they are *ordained*, that is, instituted and warranted by his law, which ordereth that there be a magistracy in civil states, and by his providence moving the people to condescend upon the particular form of government, and the fittest persons therefore; and circumscribing, bounding and limiting them in their government, by his laws.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. We may see much of God's goodness in giving us such a complete rule for our walk, and a perfect directory. *able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 17. for it holdeth forth instructions for our christian walk in all our stations and relations, whether as church members, or members of a commonwealth; and that both in reference to other fellow-members, and in reference to their superiors: for here the apostle gives directions how to carry themselves christianly in reference to their superior magistrates: *Let every soul be subject*, &c.

II. The infinitely wise God hath thought

fit, and determined for holy and wise ends, that there should not be an equality among people, which should occasion nothing but disorder, and therefore hath appointed a disparity among persons, and ordained that there should be some superiors and others inferiors, even among Christians; there are *powers*, and *powers ordained of God*, and *higher powers*; and others who are to be under them, and *subject* to them; *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers*.

III. Such is the natural desire that we have to liberty and licentiousness, that we can hardly be kept within bounds, and under subjection, but are ready to shift the yoke off our necks, and at least weary of subjection unto lawful superiors, and desire freedom to do what we list without controul, especially if we have any colour of pretext or exception against these in authority; and many under pretext of christian liberty presume to reject the yoke, Numb. xvi. 2.: therefore the apostle thinketh not sufficient here only to mind Christians of their duty, as Tit. iii. 1. but also presseth the duty with many strong and forcible arguments.

IV. Tho' many of the princes of this world have looked upon Christianity with an evil eye, as an enemy unto their power and authority, and have therefore thro' the instigation and evil counsel of devilish politicians, laboured to root Christianity out of their dominions; yet this is but an uncouth mistake thro' the policy of Satan; for Christianity is the best friend that magistracy findeth, for it alloweth none to withstand and refuse obedience unto the just and lawful commands of superiors, or yet to shift themselves from the yoke of subjection. but bindeth upon all this duty, *to be subject unto the higher powers*.

V. As the ministers of the gospel should go before Christians in a good example, by carrying themselves respectfully towards such as are set over them in their civil capacities; so should they be careful to pres-

subjection upon private Christians unto their lawful magistrates, and this to promote the peace and quiet of the commonwealth, as the apostle doth here, saying, *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.*

VI. The main duty which is called for from inferiours towards their magistrates is subjection, that is, to walk regularly under such as are set over us, yielding not only a passive stooping unto their sinless impositions, but an active concurrence unto the support and maintenance both of their persons and authorities; and in all their deportment to walk as such who are subjected unto them, yeilding obedience in a respectful manner unto their lawful commands, and humbly submitting unto their censure, when conscience will not suffer to yield obedience unto their commands: *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.*

VII. This subjection which is called for at the hands of subjects towards their magistrates should not only be manifested in their external carriage, but even in their mind and soul, thoughts and expressions; they should beware to revile them, Exod. xxii. 28. or to curse them even in the heart, Eccles. x. 20. and should esteem them highly as God's vicegerents, Psal. lxxxii. 1. 6. judging for the Lord, 2 Chron. xix. 6. 8. and love them very highly: and all their external obedience should flow from the soul and heart, cheerfully, willingly, and with inward delight; therefore the apostle says, *Let every soul be subject.*

VIII. Christianity, and the law of God, not only binds us to carry ourselves as loyal dutiful subjects, walking in an orderly and legal subordination unto such as are the supreme magistrates, but even to all whom God hath set over us in any civil place and authority, whether in a greater or smaller degree: therefore he mentioneth these magistrates indefinitely and in the plural number, saying, *Be subject unto the higher*

powers; and such are God's ordinance ordained of him; rulers, who are not to be a terror to good works, but to evil; ministers of God, bearing the sword; revengers, having power to execute wrath upon such as do evil, and to whom tribute, custom, fear or honour is due, according to their places, no less than to the supreme, and head of the commonwealth. See 1 Tim. ii. 1. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13. 14.

IX. To this subjection unto the higher powers, every particular private Christian is bound; so that tho' magistrates are bound to subject themselves unto the word and discipline of Christ, in the hands of his ministers who are set over them in the Lord, in these ecclesiastic matters, Theff. v. 12. 13. Heb. xiii. 7. 17. yet ministers and all ecclesiastic office-bearers, as they are civil members of the commonwealth, ought to be subject unto these higher powers no less than others; for here there is no exception of persons, but a command to *every soul to be subject to higher powers.*

X. In our discharging the duties which we owe unto our superiors, we should not eye much their persons, nor regard them more or less according to their personal worth and qualifications, in which respect they may be much inferior to ourselves possibly; but we should look upon them as cloathed with power and authority, and respect them under that notion; for tho' the apostle be not speaking of the power in abstract (as sometimes the word here used is taken, viz. Luke xx. 20. John xvii. 2. Rev. xvii. 13.) but of the person in whom it is, as endued therewith (as the word importeth, Luke xii. 11. Rom. viii. 38. Eph. i. 21. and iii. 10. and vi. 12. Col. ii. 15. Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. iii. 22. for it is the persons so endued that are rulers, called to such duties, as are here mentioned, and made the object of that fear, &c. here named) yet he here mentioneth them under the abstract form, to direct us to eye that mainly in our duties: *Let every soul be subject to higher powers.*

XI. Tho' we ought and may yield passive obedience unto usurpers, and such as ascend unto the throne of supremacy and magistracy by way of intrusion, without a legal and orderly manner; and so far submit, as not to quarrel with God, who, in his just judgment, doth raise up such, in his holy providence, for the punishment of men, Hof. xiii. 11. yet we are not allowed to acknowledge such for our lawful magistrates and superiors, nor bound to subject ourselves unto them as unto higher powers; for it is of such as have come to the helm of magistracy in a legal and orderly way, that the apostle is speaking here, when he says, *Let every soul be subject to higher powers*; for it is only to such as the word termed *powers* doth properly agree (as we shewed) for the most part, and such as have a moral power, and a power that is from God's approbation and authorisation; a power who must not be resisted under the greatest penalty, and so not a power resisting; and a power whose proper end is to be a terror to evil and not to good; and to be an encourager to good and not evil, which no ways can agree to an usurper. It is only such as have a superiority in regard of dignity and authority; and so are called *higher powers*, and to such doth this term agree, 1 Pet. ii. 13. 1 Tim. ii. 2. and may be called *God's ministers*, as employed and invested by his commission, warrant and deputation, and such as *beareth the sword*, which is delivered into his hands, and not taken up at his own hand.

XII. However lawful magistrates may have little strength and force to maintain their authority and dominion: yet they ought to be looked on as eminent in regard of office, order, authority and dignity; for this is an inseparable adjunct unto true magistracy; hence their throne is called *God's throne*, 1 Chron. xxix. 23. 2 Chron. ix. 8. and their judgment the Lord's, Deut. i. 17. yea, God is said to judge among them, Psal. lxxxii. 1. *Higher powers*.

XIII. The eminency, authority and dignity which God has stamped upon magistracy, should lay bonds on every subject to yield all dutiful obedience and subjection unto them; for this is an argument whereby he presseth subjection, *viz.* That they are *higher powers*.

XIV. Albeit the Lord hath not determined the particular form of government which should be in every nation, in his word, but hath left it free to the several countries to pitch upon what form they think fittest for themselves, 1 Pet. ii. 13. yet power and government in general is God's own institution, appointed by him for the good of mankind, and by his general or special providence, he directeth such and such a particular nation to choose such a government in particular, as most commodious for them; and alloweth and authoriseth such governors as are made choice of, to exercise the power, and hath clothed them with authority, dignity and superiority; and so are said to be of him, tho' in the other respect, they be called the ordinance of man, 1 Pet. ii. 13. *There is no power but of God, &c.*

XV. Not only is the supreme magistrate in a land to be looked on as authorised and warranted of God; but even the inferior subordinate magistrates, who act by commission from the supreme, are also to be owned as of God, as having authority and dignity stamped on them by the Lord: *There is no power but of God.* See Prov. viii. 15.

XVI. Tho' the Lord hath a holy sinful hand in raising up tyrants and usurpers for a scourge to sinners; and so upon that score, such may be said to be of him, as all other plagues and punishments inflicted on his people by sinful instruments, as 1 Kings xii. 15. 2 Chron. xxv. 20. yet it is only such as come to the helm of magistracy in a lawful approved way, who can with good ground say they are ordained of God, warranted and authorized by him: It is of such powers that he is speaking when

when he sayeth, *The powers that be, are ordained of God*; for such only can claim the title of gods, Exod. xxii. 28. Psal. lxxxii. 1. 4. 1 Cor. viii. 5.

XVII. The consideration of this, that magistracy is an ordinance of the only wise God, and that such as are in authority are warranted of him, and have commission from him, should move Christians to carry themselves under them in the exercise of their power, as loyal, dutiful subjects, whatever their persons be, tho' Heathens and strangers to Christ, and enemies to his kingdom; for he would have the Christian Romans live in subjection unto their heathen magistrates, emperors, consul or senate, upon this motive, that *there is no power but of God; and the powers that be, are ordained of God.*

VERSE 2. *Whoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.*

IN this verse there is other two arguments used for pressing subjection unto higher powers, as 1. That to resist, oppose and stand out against the lawful commands of the lawful powers and authority, is to resist and oppose the ordinance and appointment of God: And 2. such as resist shall receive to themselves damnation; they shall reap small fruit of their labour, they shall draw inconveniencies upon themselves and draw strokes out of the hand of him whom they oppose, or of God whose ordinance they contradict.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The refusing of subjection and obedience to lawful superiors in things lawful, is no less before God than a contemptuous standing in opposition to, and (as it were) in battle-array against these whom God hath set over them; for non-subjection is here called a resisting: *Whoever therefore resisteth.*

II. How little soever men of aspiring spirits, account of resisting, opposing and standing out against lawful authority, keeping within their bounds; yet it is no less than to oppose the ordinance and appointment of the only wise God: and the consideration of this should make Christians tender of opposing and disobeying the lawful commands of such who are lawfully in authority: *Whoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.*

III. Howbeit such as attempt the dethroning of lawful magistrates may acquire so much power and ability, as to defend themselves against any censure from the hands of the magistrates; yet as they draw down upon themselves the wrath of God, and incur his everlasting displeasure in another world; so they provoke God to pursue them with judgment on this side of time: *For they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.*

IV. The consideration of this, that the opposers of lawful authority bring themselves under God's premunire, should move all the people of God to be in subjection unto their lawful magistrates, and be careful to yield obedience unto their lawful commands; for this is another argument, *They that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.*

VERSES 3. 4. *For rulers are, not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: -*

For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.

THE apostle presseth the same duty, by other two arguments, in these verses: In the third verse they are set down more briefly, and in the other more

largely and plainly; and by these arguments he also confirmeth the last argument which he used. Now, these arguments are taken from the proper end of magistracy, and of magistrates faithfully discharging their duty; and these ends are two, in reference to two distinct sorts of people, *viz.* either good or bad; and to the good he says, first, they are not a terror to these; they are not appointed of God to scar folk from doing of good, but upon the contrary, they are to shew praise and give praise unto such; they are ordained of God to countenance and encourage such as do well; so that any who would keep themselves out of their hands, should be doing that which is good, because he is substituted by God as his master, to help thee forward, and to encourage thee in good, even every particular person. And, secondly, as for such as are wicked livers, he should be a terror to them, in regard he has a sword committed to him by the Lord, which he is to bear, and that not in vain, but as God's deputy he is to take vengeance on such with the sword, and execute wrath upon them; therefore all these who withstand and resist such, may expect to themselves damnation: and therefore every good Christian should labour to live in subjection under such magistrates as are doing their duty in subordination to God, and are faithful in the discharge thereof.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' many such as are honoured of God to be magistrates over people, be ready to abuse their power, and prove a terror unto such as are, or would be about their duty; yet the end why the Lord did institute this ordinance of magistracy, was to bear down iniquity, and to terrify evil doers: and all magistrates who would discharge their duty acceptably, should to carry themselves, as evil-doers of whatever sort may tremble and be afraid: *Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.*

II. It is such who are conscious to themselves of wickedness, and have no will to be curbed or kept within bounds, that are most ready to stand out against and resist lawful authority: it is such that he is or ought to be a terror unto; for he says, *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?* It is such as are the sons of Belial that are most unwilling to be subject to higher powers.

III. The very consideration of the power and authority which God hath clothed magistrates with, should be an awe-band over the heads of evil-doers, and should cause them walk civilly, honestly, and soberly, according to the laws of justice and equity: *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good.*

IV. As magistrates are bound before God, to employ their power for the curbing of vice and bearing down of iniquity, so should they endeavour the promoting of justice, equity, and religion, within their dominion, by countenancing, maintaining, favouring, rewarding, and esteeming highly of such as are walking honestly according to their places and callings: *Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.*

V. The consideration of the end why the Lord hath substituted magistrates, and hath set them over his people, *viz.* for the promoting of their good and advantage, should strongly move magistrates to mind this end, and to lay forth themselves to the uttermost for the encouragement of such as do well; for he addeth, verse 4. as a reason why such as do good should expect praise of the power, *For he is the minister of God to thee for good.*

VI. Magistrates should not think they have sufficiently discharged their duty, when they have promoted the civil good of the subjects, by keeping them in peace, by ruling them according to the laws of the land; but they should also see to their spiritual good, and labour for the advancement of religion and piety within their dominions,

minions, by encouraging the faithful servants of God, and such as are truly pious; by restraining vice and impiety, and punishing such as are heretics, and erroneous seducers of the people; for *they are the ministers of God for good*, and that indefinitely for every sort of good; and they are to be *a terror to evil-doers*, among whom heretics and seducers are to be ranked, Phil. iii. 2. 2 John. 10. 11. as being such as should be shunned, 2 Cor. vii. 11. Tit. iii. 10. 2 Tim. iii. 5. 6. Rom. xvi. 17. 18. See Gen. xxxv. 2. 3. 4. 18. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 15. 16. 34. and xix. 4. Ezra vi. 11. and vii. 26. Dan. iii. and vi. Exod. xxxii. 26. 27. 28. Deut. xiii. and xvii. 2. Zech. xiii. 1. to 7. For the apostle is here speaking of the magistrate as he ought to be, be he Heathen or Christian; *He beareth not the sword in vain*, but is *to execute wrath upon such as do evil*.

VII. As the Lord calleth magistrates to promote both the temporal and spiritual good of their subjects; so has he endued them with power and authority for that effect; he has given them commission to act for the Lord; and, withal, has clothed them with a coercive constraining power for that effect; he hath a sword: *He is the minister of God for good*, and *beareth not the sword in vain*.

VIII. Tho' civil magistrates are bound to promote the spiritual good of their subjects, yet they are not to do this in an ecclesiastic manner; they may not preach, administer sacraments, or exercise church-discipline, for this is laid upon ecclesiastic officers; but to do it in a civil, political way, as being endued with authority of compelling in a lordly magisterial manner: therefore they have a sword, and by the use of the sword they are to promote the subjects good, and to execute wrath upon such as do evil: *He beareth not the sword in vain*, but is *a revenger to execute wrath upon such as do evil*.

IX. Howbeit magistrates have a lordly power and dominion over the subjects,

yet in respect of God, all their power is but ministerial; as they have their commission from him, so are they to act in subordination to him and his glory, and to promote the same with singleness of heart, as faithful servants to him to whom they must one day give an account: They are *the ministers of God*.

X. As one may rashly and without a clear call and commission, gird the sword of magistracy and authority about themselves; so such as God hath girded therewith should not suffer it to rust, but should duely and orderly draw out the same, by enacting lawful and laudable statutes according to the law of God, passing sentence upon malefactors and contraveners, according to justice and equity, and putting the same sentences into execution in judgment: *He beareth not the sword in vain*, but is *to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*.

XI. Tho' magistrates, in the execution of justice, should be free of any private self-revenge, and should not be acted by that spirit; yet ought they to execute justice, the laws of God, and of the land, impartially, against all malefactors, with all authority and majesty, as God's vicerents and deputies, for the further terror of evil-doers: Hence he is said to be *a revenger, to execute wrath, &c.*

XII. The consideration of the magistrates relation and subordination unto God, as his ministers, and of the end of their institution, and of the power and authority with which they are clothed, should be a strong inducement to move all Christians to yield all due subjection and respect unto them; for this is the force of the apostle's argument here. And the same considerations should ascertain us, that such as resist and oppose such lawful governors in the lawful discharge of their duty, shall not escape damnation; for by this he proves the argument mentioned in the end of verse 2d.

VERSE 5. *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath; but also for conscience sake.*

FROM the fore-mentioned reasons the apostle draws a conclusion, which hath the force of a new argument in the bosom of it, *viz.* That it is not left to our option whether to be subject unto our lawful superiors, or not; but there is a necessity lying upon us, and therefore we must mind this duty: Now this necessity ariseth upon a double account; 1. Because of *wrath*: We must subject ourselves, otherways we expose ourselves to the just revenge of the sword. 2. *For conscience sake*; out of conscience to the command of God, and lest we wound our consciences, and expose ourselves to the just challenges thereof.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is not left as a thing indifferent unto private subjects, whether to subject themselves unto their superiors or not, but there is a necessity lying upon them to obey their lawful commands; or, if their commands be such as they cannot obey in conscience, they must subject themselves unto their censure and punishment: *Ye must needs be subject.*

II. Magistrates may lawfully punish such with the sword of justice, as do rebel and refuse subjection unto their power and lawful commands: *We must be subject for wrath's cause*, that we may shun their wrath and displeasure.

III. Tho' the laws of magistrates that are merely human and positive, lay no bond on the conscience, kindly and of themselves, otherways the conscience should be bound to the same, tho' there were no command of the magistrate; yet when their laws are expressly God's laws, the conscience is bound; and in other things which are yet lawful, conscience to the command of God should bind us, seeing he has commanded us to obey them; and out of re-

spect to the public good and peace, which God's word commandeth us to seek, Heb. xiii. 14. Rom. xii. 18. Psalm xxxiv. 14.: and when their commands are sinful, nothing must be done to the open dishonour of the magistrate, the law of God binding us not to disgrace or affront him, but to honour and esteem him, 1 Pet. ii. 17. Eccles. x. 20. and in these respects even their human laws binds the conscience; if not to obedience, yet to patient suffering: *Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.*

IV. As God hath endued every man with a conscience, a beam of light, or a power deputed in the soul, to take notice of all the actions of man; so this deputy of God hath an eye upon man, not only as to these actions which concern God more immediately, but also as to these which concern their relation unto others, whether superiors or not: for here conscience takes notice of folks subjection unto superiors, and *for conscience sake we must be subject*, because conscience will bind on this duty upon us.

V. As conscience has a directing ability to point forth what is folks duty, when it is not biassed or blinded, so has it a power to bind the duty upon the man, and affect and trouble him if he run counter its direction; for to avoid the sting of conscience, and the challenges thereof, we must be subject.

VI. Seeing this conscience is put into the soul of every man, as God's deputy, weight should be laid upon the directions thereof, when it speaks according to the word which is ~~our~~ only rule: the very dictates of conscience should put us to minding of subjection; we must be subject for conscience sake.

VERSES 6. 7. *For, for this cause pay you tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom,*

cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

IN theſe verſes the apoſtle is preſſing, in the next place, (upon the forementioned grounds alſo,) ſome particular duties in reference to their lawful ſuperiors, with a new reaſon enforcing the ſame: *As, 1. That they ſhould pay tribute; and this he repeateth again, poſſibly becauſe they ſeemed moſt averſe from it, as having leaſt advantage for it; for it is ſuppoſed to have been pole-money, or a taxation put upon the head, Matth. xvii. 25. 2. Cuſtom; that is, impoſt put upon merchant-ware, and payable by imported or exported commodities. 3. Fear; that is a reverential awe, fearing to offend. And, 4. Honour; that is, a high eſtimation of their perſons, for their qualifications and places, with an outward reſpectiſe carriage teſtifying the ſame; by words and geſtures. The reaſon which he uſeth for this is in theſe words, For they are God's miniſters, attending continually upon this very thing; that is, they are his public miniſters, laying out themſelves wholly for the good of the republic, and making this their only work, night and day; to eye their ſubjects good; and becauſe this is the employment they are wholly taken up with, therefore they ſhould have all due encouragement from their ſubjects.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Such whom God employeth in the place and office of magiſtracy, ought to be men of public ſpirits, poſtponing their own intereſt unto the good of the public, and look upon themſelves as doing God good ſervice, and as employed of him for that effect: *They are God's miniſters, or public officers.*

II. Magiſtrates ought not to be careleſs in the matters of government committed to their truſt, but ought to be aſſiduous, painful and laborious, in ſeeking and endeavouring after the good of the common-

wealth; and the buſineſs of public government is ſuch as will take them up wholly: *They are miniſters of God, attending continually upon this very thing.*

III. The Lord alloweth unto magiſtrates, who are to mind the public more than their own good, a honourable maintenance of the ſubjects; and it is the ſubjects duty to be ſubmitting unto ſuch reaſonable and neceſſary taxation as are impoſed for the managing of public affairs: they muſt *pay tribute and cuſtom to whom it is due.*

IV. The very conſideration of the office, employment, and daily work of the magiſtrate, being a matter of ſuch concernment to the ſubjects, of ſuch trouble, anxiety, and continual exerciſe unto the magiſtrate, ſhould move the ſubjects to yield out of their own ſubſtance, for the maintenance and encouragement of theſe in power, willingly and chearfully, as a debt due in all juſtice and equity: for this is the apoſtle's argument, and therefore he bids them *pay and render tribute and cuſtom to whom it is due.*

V. It is the duty of ſubjects to be reverencing, ſtanding in awe and fearing to offend ſuch as the Lord hath ſet over them; and to ſhew the ſame by their external behaviour: *Fear to whom fear.*

VI. As God hath placed magiſtrates in a ſuper-eminent place over others; ſo to recompenſe their toiling and caring for the good of the public, he alloweth them honour and eſtimation at the hands of their inferiors; and ſubjects are bound to eſteem them very highly for their work's ſake, (whatever their perſons be) to ſpeak reverently of them and to them, and in every thing to carry reſpectfully towards them, giving them due reſpect and homage: *Honour to whom honour.* See 1 Pet. ii. 17.

VERSES 8. 9. 10. *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law.*

For this, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou

Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

IN this second part of the chapter, the apostle is pressing them to another duty of more general concernment, viz. Christian love, which tho' he spoke to in the former chapter, yet he thinks fit to speak to here also, and to press it, because most necessary and most slighted: and this he speaks to upon the back of the former purpose, as a most pertinent and profitable mean for driving on that duty. Now, this he uttereth in with a transition, containing a general exhortation, serving both the former purpose and this likewise, which is this, *Owe no man any thing*; be he superior, inferior, or equal, be not short-coming in your duty towards him; pay them all you owe them by any obligation natural or civil. Now the duty he presseth is *to love one another*; a debt which they must still lie under, and still be putting off them: and for this he useth one main argument, saying, *For he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law*; that is, he hath win to the sum and substance of all the second table of the law, for of this mainly he speaketh, as verse 9th cleareth; for this love of another is the very compound of all the second table. This argument he confirmeth by two reasons, the one, verse 9. shewing, that every one of the commands of the second table (which he particularly enumerateth, except the first, which he takes in under that general, *And if there be any other, &c.*) is summed up in this one word, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. The other reason is, verse 10. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour*; it is that which keepeth a man from devising any hurt to his neighbour: and so he concludes, *there-*

fore love is the fulfilling of the law; it is the sum of what is required in the second table, and where this love is, there is obedience in some measure to all these commands.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is the duty of Christians to be minding their obligations to every one, be they superiors, inferiors, or equals; and in particular to be making conscience to mind their obligations in civil contracts and debts, so as none may have just cause to complain of them; and for this cause should so manage the little God gives them, frugally, as they may be in capacity to defray their debts, and give every one their own, that no man be a loser at their hands, or conceive a prejudice at them and their profession for walking so unjustly: *Owe no man any thing*. See 2 Kings iv. 1. 2. 3. Prov. iii. 27. and vi. 1. 2. 3.

II. Tho' Christian love be a most comely desirable thing, and an ornament unto the profession of Christianity; yet it is a duty which doth much cross flesh and blood, and therefore needeth to be inculcated again and again; for tho' he spoke it in the former chapter, ver. 9. 10. yet he seeth a necessity of speaking to it again here; *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another*. See 1 Tim. vi. 11. 1 Cor. xiv. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

III. This duty of Christian love is a duty lying upon all ranks, qualities and conditions of persons, and every one is to look upon it as a duty called for at his hands: It is a mutual christian duty; we *should love one another*. See John xiii. 34. and xv. 17. 1 Thess. iv. 9. Col. iii. 14.

IV. This mutual christian love is a yoke laid on that cannot be shaken off, and a debt that we are daily lying under, and will never be freed from; and so is a duty that should endure, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. and continue, Heb. xiii. 1. and be looked upon as a debt which we are bound to pay, and be still in paying unto our neighbours:

Owe

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.

V. Tho' believers be bound to have a special respect and love unto such as are brethren in grace, 1 Pet. ii. 17. Gal. vi. 10. as being children of the same Father, seeing God hath loved us, 1 John iv. 11. and has commanded us to this, 1 John iv. 21. and seeing hereby, we shall evidence that we know God, 1 John iv. 8. that God dwelleth in us, 1 John iv. 12. that we love God, 1 John iv. 20. and abide in light, 1 John ii. 10. 11. are of God, 1 John iii. 10. and have passed from death to life, 1 John iii. 14. And tho' as to the effects of our love, and the complacency and delight which followeth the act of loving, and the frequency of these acts, we may love some more than others, as to such things which do concern that conjunction and relation which they have to us beyond others, such as our natural relations, 1 Tim. v. 4. friends and familiars, Prov. xviii. 24. our benefactors, Gal. vi. 6. and the like; yet as to the thing desired, which should be the best, *viz.* life eternal, peace with God, &c. and as to the affection of love itself, and the habit, it should equally as to its intenseness terminate upon all men, be they saints, Col. i. 4. or strangers, Deut. x. 19. 20. whoever may be called our neighbour, Lev. xix. 18. Matth. xix. 19. *We should love one another, and love our neighbour.* See 1 Pet. ii. 17.

VI. Tho' believers be out of the reach of the condemning power of the law, yet such weight should the law have upon the spirits of believers, as to its directing power, that the more a duty be pressed on them by the same, it should be the more studied, and endeavoured; for to press them to love, he tells them, that it is the sum, compound and drift of all the second table: *It is the fulfilling of the law.*

VII. As our love of God, with all the heart, strength, soul and mind, is the sum and substance of all the first table of the law; so our love of our neighbour is

the sum and substance of the second table: *Love is the fulfilling of the law.* See Matth. xxii. 39. Jam. ii. 8. Gal. v. 14.

VIII. Tho' we ought not so to love ourselves, as to make ourselves the end of our actions, 1 Tim. iii. 3. and to be so taken up with our own matters as to postpone the things of God, public matters, and the things of others, Phil. ii. 4. and be more about the matters of this life, than about soul matters; yet we are allowed to love ourselves in subordination to God's honour; to seek, mainly, the things of the kingdom of heaven, and other things as subservient unto our spiritual good; when we are commanded to *love our neighbour as ourselves*, we are allowed to love ourselves.

IX. Tho' we be not commanded to love every one, every way, as well as we do ourselves; yet ought we so to love them as not to seek or desire their hurt more than our own, Matth. vii. 12. but to labour to procure their good as much as lieth in us, as we would seek to procure our own, and to love them unfeignedly, 2 Cor. vi. 6. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 Tim. i. 5. sincerely, 2 Cor. viii. 8. 1 John iii. 18. soundly, Tit. ii. 2. and fervently, 1 Pet. iv. 8. so that we should love them in the same subordination, Matth. x. 37. and sincerity, for the same end, and from the same principle, *viz.* conscience to a command, 1 John iv. 21. that we love ourselves; for we are to *love our neighbour as we do ourselves*, the orderly and lawful love of ourselves should be as a rule whereby to square and measure our love to others. See Lev. xvii. 18. Matth. xxii. 39. Jam. ii. 8.

X. This loving of our neighbours as we do ourselves, would preserve us from wronging them in their honour, persons, name and goods, and would put us to use all lawful means to procure their good, both spiritual and temporal, and in a word would keep us from transgressing any command of the second table, whether in thought, word or in deed: *For this, Thou*

Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. See Gal. v. 14. Heb. x. 24. It has a labour with it, 1 Thess. i. 3. Heb. vi. 10.

XI. Where this love is, there is no devising, contriving or seeking of the hurt of our neighbour; there will not be so much as the taking up of an ill report against him, Psal. xv. 3. for it envieth not, 1 Cor. xiii. 4. but suffereth long, and is not easily provoked, nor thinketh evil, *ibid.* but covereth a multitude of sins, 1 Pet. iv. 8. and therefore fiteth a man for a christian, peaceable walking with others: *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour.*

XII. The scope and drift of the second table of the law, is to bind up our hands from injuring and wronging our neighbour, whom we ought to serve in love, Gal. v. 13. any manner of way; for from this, that *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour*, he concludeth, that *therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

VERSES 11. 12. 13. 14. *And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

IN this last part of the chapter the apostle after his pressing of several christian duties in particular upon them, from the beginning of the twelfth chapter, doth press them unto a christian holy con-

versation, such as did become the followers of Christ, and that both negatively and positively, both in general and in particular; and for this effect he maketh use of some arguments and motives. We shall 1st, speak to the duties pressed, as they ly in order, and 2dly, speak to the arguments used for the enforcing of these duties, and 1. says he, verse 12. *Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness;* a metaphor taken from folks rising up by break of day, and casting by their night-cloaths and bed-cloaths; now, says he, let us cast off the burden of night-cloaths, that we have been lying under; the works of darkness and ignorance, the sins with which we have been wrapped about in the night of our ignorance and folly, while we lived in an unregenerate state, and which suited a state of ignorance and darkness. 2. *Let us put on the armour of light;* that is, Let us put on the garments of righteousness and holiness, that becometh the light of a regenerated state, and that may be as pieces of armour to defend ourselves with; for we are now to resolve upon a continual war. 3. And more particularly: *Let us walk honestly as in the day;* that is, Let us lead a course of life becoming Christians, and a state of regeneration, and walk soberly, godly and justly, Tit. ii. 12. 4. *Not in rioting and drunkenness;* that is, Not in luxurious feasting and banqueting, tending to lasciviousness and riotousness, in bawdy songs, and other aſſings, nor in beastly drunkenness, or intoxicating ourselves with drink; *Not in chambering or wantonness;* that is, Not in all manner of filthiness and uncleanness, as fornication, adultery, and the like; nor in lascivious, effeminate wantonness, and obscenity in discourses and actions, or monstrous profusion of themselves in lasciviousness: *Not in strife and envying;* Not in brawling, scolding, striving or quarreling, nor grieving at the good of others, or wicked emulation, as it is, rendered, Gal. v. 20. 5. Again positively; *But put ye on the Lord Jesus;* get an union, made

made up with the Lord, that his righteousness may cover our nakedness and vile-ness, and his graces may adorn us and make us comely; so we must put him on, both as Jesus, and as Lord. 6. Then negatively; *And make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*: he would not have us taking too much pains upon the body, and to pamper the flesh, so as the provision shall turn to excess, and so stir up the lusts of the flesh, and provoke to them, as to pride, uncleanness, &c.

The arguments which he useth to press these duties are three, *vers. 11. 12. 1. And knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep*; considering how now it is more than time, that we awake out of that sleepy condition of sin and ignorance, wherein we have been lying so long, we should stir up ourselves to walk in knowledge and holiness. 2. *For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed*; that is, We are further on in our journey than when we began to start to the gate, and nearer to the end of the race, the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls, 1 Pet. i. 9. and therefore we should now take courage and shake off laziness and security, and run out the race that is set before us. 3. *The night is far spent, the day is at hand*; that is, The time of ignorance, and wherein sin is committed is near an end, and the time of light is partly come in your conversion; day is broken, and the light is growing, so that the full light of holiness is coming fast on: therefore ye should be minding holiness which is the work of this day of eternity.

OBSERVATIONS in general.

I. As ministers must press particular duties of Christianity upon particular persons, according to their particular relations and conditions; so must they press a holy christian strain in all their conversation and in every piece thereof; for, after the particular duties pressed formerly, he now cometh to press holiness upon them in the general, 1 Pet. i. 15.

II. Ministers should not think that they have sufficiently discharged their duty in pressing holiness upon people, when they have dissuaded them from some vices and sinful actions, and so lulled up people in the sleep of a formal civil life, and of a negative holiness; but should press upon people the positive part also; for so doth Paul here press both negative and positive duties of holiness, and often elsewhere. See 1 Pet. i. 13. 14. 15. 16.

III. It is not sufficient to dissuade people from sinful courses in the general, but there is a necessity to mention particulars unto them, that so the exhortations may not be shifted; for Paul instanteth several particulars. See Gal. v. 19. 20. 21.

IV. So averse are people from the strict way of holiness, it is so cross to their carnal humours and dispositions, that there is a necessity of frequent inculcating the same upon them, and they had need to be pressed to it again and again; for the apostle is pressing the same thing here over and over again.

V. As ministers of the gospel ought to be serious in all their deportment in and among people, so especially when they are pressing them to holiness, which is the upshot of all their ministerial carriage; for the apostle is very serious here, and presseth the business with weighty convincing arguments.

From verse 11. OBSERVE,

I. People before conversion are lying in a state of sleep and security, fearing no danger, acting nothing for God, but resting over in the bed of sin and iniquity, lulled asleep by Satan, drowned in worldly cares, ignorance and sinfulness, and there is much of this temper even upon believers who are but in part awakened: *Now it is high time to awake out of sleep.*

II. That consideration of the time and opportunity which we have granted to us is not rightly improven, which is not made use of as a spur in our side to stir us up to amendment of life, but as a wicked motive

to continue a while longer in the course of sin: the apostle would have them so *knowing the time* as to look upon it as *high time for them to awake out of sleep*.

III. The consideration of the doleful condition of such as are sleeping in black nature, unregenerated, and of such regenerated ones as are far short-coming in their duty of holiness, and of the long time of their continuance in that state and condition, should strongly excite and stir up all to a more serious and painful study of holiness, whereby God may be glorified and others edified; for this is the force of Paul's reason, whereby he presseth them to sanctification, viz. that it was *now high time to awake out of sleep*. See 1 Pet. iv. 3.

IV. The life of a Christian is nothing but a continual motion, there is no standing still for them here, they are upon their march and quick journey; hence it is often compared to a race, 1 Cor. ix. 24. Heb. xii. 1. and believers are said to walk, Col. ii. 6. Gal. v. 16. Rom. vi. 4. and this is supposed when he says, that *their salvation is nearer than when they believed* at first.

V. The constant motion and continual walk of a believer is from sin, hell, and death, and towards life, salvation, and communion with God everlastingly, whatever the wretched, blinded multitude think of them and their carriage: salvation by everlasting communion with God is the butt they level at, and the shore they are still directing their course towards, however sad storms may often drive them back a piece, and push them to and fro: *Your salvation is nearer*.

VI. Howbeit poor unbelievers be deceived by Satan, and made to believe that they are sure enough of heaven; yet faith in Jesus Christ, and the closing of a bargain with the offered Mediator, is the only door to life eternal, and the very entry into the way and road which leadeth to heaven; it is, as it were, the first mile in the way, so that whosoever have not closed with Christ,

tho' they had never so glancing a conversation outwardly, are not one step advanced in the road to heaven; *Your salvation is nearer than when ye believed*; believing was the first thing that brought salvation near.

VII. The greater progress a believer has made in Christianity, and the nearer he is unto the end of his journey, the more chearful, courageous and forward should he be in the same; the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, approaching and drawing near, should make them run the rest of their race with alacrity and good will; for this is the apostle's argument, wherewith he presseth holiness, viz. *That their salvation was nearer than when they believed*. See 2 Tim. iv. 7.

VIII. Tho' believers being bemisted and overclouded with darkness and temptation, may miss the sight of heaven, and question their interest thereto; yet it is a truth that they may rest upon, that the longer it is since they closed a bargain with Christ, and the longer they have walked in the way of God, heaven is so much nearer unto them, and they to it: *Your salvation is nearer than when ye believed*. See Phil. iii. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 12.

From verse 12. OBSERVE,

I. As the state and condition of unbelievers is nothing but a state of darkness, ignorance, blindness and confusion, like folk walking out of the way in midnight gross darkness, 1 Thess. v. 4. 5. Eph. v. 8. so the state of believers (tho' in respect of the condition of unbelievers it be clear light and day, yet) in regard of the mass of corruption that still attends them, and comparative to the great light that is coming, when they shall shine in light and in glory, is but a night, at least not very clear day: *The night is far spent*; it is not all spent, but it is spending.

II. Tho' the case and condition of believers be a day in comparison of the dead dark condition of unbelievers, yet their clearest day is but coming, when eternity shall dawn, and they shall enter within the ports of the

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the New Jerusalem; where they shall need no sun; and the clearest time that they have here, is but like the dawning and first breaking up of this day: *The day is at hand*; the clear day is not yet come, but in coming.

III. The nearer we conceive eternity to be, and the dawning of that lightsome day that shall never have a night on the back thereof; the more desirous should we be to grow in grace and advance in holiness, and to shake off corruption and other works of darkness; for thus reasoneth the apostle: *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness.* See 1 Pet. iv. 7.

IV. Believers, however renewed and sanctified in part, yet have still some of the old rags of sin and corruption sticking fast unto them, and are in part clothed with these night-cloaths of sin and iniquity, and will have cause still to be minding this exhortation, to be putting them off; *Let us cast off the works of darkness.*

V. Tho' Satan busk up sin, so as it appeareth beautiful and desirable unto poor deluded souls; yet sin is nothing but a work of darkness flowing from darkness and ignorance, Acts iii. 17. and the instigation of the prince of darkness, Eph. vi. 12. more suitable for to be committed in the dark, than in the day, and which accordingly is commonly so done, 1 Thess. v. 7. and in end, of themselves, lead and draw the poor soul unto blackness of darkness; for they are here called *works of darkness*.

VI. It is not sufficient that we shake off vices and outward abominations, and so become free of gross outbreaks, but we must also labour for positive holiness and sanctity; we must not only *cast off the works of darkness*, but we must *put on the armour of light*.

VII. However many look on holiness with an evil eye, and are ashamed to profess and avouch the same; yet it is a most glorious, excellent, lightsome, shining thing; it is here called *light*, as wrought

by the Sun of Righteousness, who is a Spirit of light, and coming from clear knowledge and understanding, and leading in the ways of God towards everlasting light and salvation: *The armour of light*. See Matth. v. 16.

VIII. Tho' holiness and sanctification cannot be sufficient to justify a man before God, which the righteousness of Christ, apprehended by faith, can only do; yet it will do much to defend a man from the injuries of Satan, and fit him more to engage with Satan, and to stand out against his sharp assaults, whileas sin exposeth the soul to further slavery; therefore is it called *the armour of light*.

IX. The nearer believers are unto the end of their journey, the less cause have they to be secure; Satan, who is daily going about as a roaring lion, 1 Pet. v. 8. will then be most active and troublesome, knowing that the time is but short wherein they will stand upon the field; and therefore believers have the greater need to be upon their guard, and to resolve to go out of the world fighting, and in the heat of war; *tho' their salvation be now nearer than when they believed, and the night be far spent, and the day at hand*; yet they must resolve on fighting, and therefore must *put on armour, even the armour of light*.

X. Assurance of salvation, and a sure persuasion of a final day of victory over Satan and sin, is so far from casting believers over into a deep sleep of security and carelessness, that, on the contrary, it is a strong motive and inducement to vigilance and courageous fighting it out to the uttermost; for the apostle told them, *their salvation was near, and the day of a final delivery was at hand*; and now he infereth hence, that they should so much the more *put on armour*.

From verse 13. OBSERVE,

I. Tho' the sweet day that is dawned upon believers be not come to its height of glory and splendor, yet their condition is now very lightsome beside what it was,

was, and they are delivered from a state of darkness, blindness, and deadness, and are now become *light in the Lord*, Eph. v. 8. and no more walking in the night, but in the day: they are to *walk as in the day*. See Acts xxvi. 18. 1 Thess. v. 5.

II. This great goodness and mercy of God, manifested towards believers, in thus delivering them out of the dark dungeon of sin and death, and bringing them into a state of life and friendship, light and knowledge, should lay strong bonds upon them to walk answerable unto such favours, and unto the state that God hath now translated them into: and seeing that day-light and grace is risen upon them, they should labour to manifest the same in their walk, and *walk as in the day*.

III. Believers, in all the pieces of their carriage and conversation, should labour to be honest, decent, modest, and mannerly, and so to shine forth in sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, that thereby they may gain others, and not be a shame and a scandal to the gospel: *Let us walk honestly*. See 1 Cor. xiv. 40. 1 Thess. iv. 12.

IV. So strong is corruption in the best, and so unable are they when left to themselves, to resist temptations to the most abominable and loathsome of vices, that they stand in great hazard to be drawn away with those evils, and have therefore need to be guarding against these, and dehorted from them by the servants of God: for the apostle is here dehorting these Romans from gross vices, as *surfeiting, drunkenness, chambering and wantonness*, &c. See Noah's and David's case.

V. Luxurious feasting, and lascivious banqueting, and excess of belly cheer, is unsuitable for Christians, and a heinous provoking of God, and which Christians should shun by all means: *Not in rioting*. See Amos vi. 4. 5. 6. Isa. v. 12. and xxii. 12. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 3. Gal. v. 21.

VI. As drunkenness is a most insatiating, overcharging thing, Luke xxi. 34. Hof. iv. 11. causing woe both to body and mind,

Prov. xxiii. 29. 30. 31.; so is it most unbecoming Christians, who have attained to any thing of the knowledge of God, and are come out of darkness to light: *Not in rioting and drunkenness*. See Eph. v. 8. compared with 18. 1 Thess. v. 5. 6. 7. 8.

VII. As sickness and uncleanness in speech and behaviour, is oftentimes ushered in by luxurious feasting and drinking, Prov. xxiii. 33.; so it besmeareth and defileth a Christian's conversation, and makes his walk no way honest and becoming: *Not in chambering and wantonness*. See Mark vii. 22. 2 Cor. xii. 21. Eph. iv. 19. Gal. v. 19.

VIII. It is an unchristian carriage to be living in anger, strife, and debate with neighbours, and still quarrelling, brawling and scolding for every thing that occurs, and mareth the modest carriage of a Christian; *Not in strife*. See 1 Cor. i. 11. iii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20. Gal. v. 20. Phil. i. 15. 1 Tim. vi. 4. Tit. iii. 9.

IX. As grudging and grieving at the good and welfare of others is utterly unbecoming a Christian, who should be filled with love, 1 Cor. xiii. 4.; so doth it occasion much needless strife and debate: *Strife and envy* go oft together. See Acts xvii. 5. 1 Cor. iii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20. Gal. v. 20. James iii. 14.

From verse 14. OBSERVE,

I. The not improving and use-making of the spirit of Christ, for renovation and sanctification, is the cause why the children of God come so far short of their duty, and are so oft surprized with temptation, and overcome by Satan, and drawn to act iniquity; for as an antidote against the vices mentioned in the former verse, he exhorteth them to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*.

II. Howbeit all who have been baptised, (and so believers among the rest,) have openly engaged and promised to put on Christ, Rom. vi. 4. yet believers have need oftentimes to be put in mind of their duty, and of this among the rest; *To put on the Lord Jesus Christ*.

III. Tho'

III. Tho' many fancy and dream of an interest in Christ because of their outward profession, civil carriage, or some such sandy ground; yet such as would have the benefit of a real interest in him, must have a real union made up with him; for before we can get virtue from him to preserve us from outward wickedness, we must *put on the Lord Jesus*.

IV. Jesus Christ is a complete covering for sinners, not only able to cover their nakedness by his righteousness, Rev. iii. 18. and so to save them from the wrath of God, but also able to make them beautiful and comely, without spot or blemish, Eph. v. 27. by the powerful operations and effects of his sanctifying Spirit, and so to preserve them, as a perfect armour or coat of mail, against the assaults of Satan without, and of lusts and corruptions within: for here, to preserve the believing Romans from these filthy abominations mentioned before, he bids them *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*; for that he is a covering not only as a *Jesus*, but also as a *Lord*.

V. It is not enough for people to close a bargain with Christ at the first, and by faith get his righteousness put on, that thereby guilt may be hid, and they put into a justified state; but also, because they will still be falling out into new transgressions, they will still need of new to be covered with a lap of that righteousness; and because they have no stock of grace of their own, to bear them out against fierce assaults of temptation, and winter-blasts of corruption, but are daily impeded and hindered from bringing forth the fruits of righteousness which they are called to, therefore their putting on of Christ must be a constantly renewed or continued act; and this is it which is elsewhere called the putting on of the new man, Col. iii. 10. 12. 14. Ephes. iv. 24. therefore doth he exhort even these believing Romans, to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*. See Gal. iii. 27.

VI. To be so much taken up with the flesh and carnal part, as to be still forecast-

ing what may be for its advantage, and contriving all things for the behoof thereof, is utterly inconsistent with the putting on of the new man, and the graces of the Spirit of Christ; for these go together, *to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not to make provision for the flesh*.

VII. Sin and corruption have seized upon the whole man, and defiled not only the understanding, 1 Cor. i. 23. and the will, Rom. viii. 7. but also the sensual part, the flesh is infected therewith; for here *provision must not be made thereto*, and it hath *sinful lusts and desires*. See Eph. ii. 3.

VIII. Believers should not only guard against the external outbreakings of corruption, to the scandal of the gospel, but they should even beware of the first rise of the motions of sin, and should endeavour what they can to prevent the first budings of sin within; for they must see that they stir not up the *lusts of the flesh*, even these first motions towards unlawful objects, that precede the actual consent of the will. See Ephes. ii. 3.

IX. Tho' the Lord allow us the moderate and sober use of the creatures for the sustentation of our natural bodies, Ephes. v. 29. 1 Tim. v. 8. 23. yet the very awe of God, and fear lest we give occasion to this undaunted wild beast, the flesh, to break loose and go beyond bounds, should move us to sobriety, and dissuade us from pampering the same, and from satisfying the boundless desires of it.

X. Ministers should be careful in all their exhortations to holiness and sanctification to lead people out of themselves, and to bring them in to Christ their only furniture and strength; and people should resolve to set about every duty in the strength of the Lord, trusting to him, and making use of him by faith for that effect; for now in the end of his pressing these Romans unto holiness, he leads them in to Christ, saying, *And put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*.



CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER the apostle has, as we have heard, laid before these Romans, several necessary duties suitable for them, as Christians in general, and according to their several relations, he now comes to handle a point of present use and concernment for them, *viz.* That seeing they who were converted to the faith of Christ, were not all of one and the same size, but some weak and some strong among them, by reason of which there was a daily feeding storm of strife and contention among them in their daily walk, and concerning their daily carriage; he thinks it needful to spend some time upon the ground of this unchristian disagreement, and therefore speaks to it through all this chapter, and in the beginning of the next.

That the subject of the apostle's discourse may be the better understood, and his doctrine taken up, we must shortly take notice of these few particulars:

1st, In this city of Rome there were converts both of Jews, Acts viii. and Roman Gentiles; and therefore thro' the Epistle we may mark how the apostle speaks to both indifferently, and sometimes more expressly.

2^{dly}, The ground of this debate and contention among these, was some parts of the ceremonial law; such as unclean meats, which by the ceremonial law might not be eaten; and solemn days, beside the weekly sabbath, such as their new moons, their solemn feasts, and solemn fast-days, and the like: see verses 2. 5.

3^{dly}, The Jews, chiefly such as were not as yet sufficiently instructed in the nature of their christian liberty, and knew not how Christ had nailed that law of commandments to the cross, and had untied the yoke of the ceremonial law from their necks, and being inured to that way of worshipping God, could not at the first be induced to quit that way whereby they and their fathers had worshiped God for so many generations, and that way which was taught their forefathers by eminent Moses.

4^{thly}, And, upon the other hand, the Gentiles neither would conform with the Jews in these ceremonies, as being never acquainted with them, as to their own practice; and such of the Jews as had learned more of their christian liberty, and knew how Christ had freed them from bondage, would not practise these ceremonial pieces of service.

5^{thly}, Upon this arose daily disputes and dissensions among them, the strong despising such as could not see so far as they, and disregarding them as needlessly scrupling brethren, starting at straws: Upon the other hand, such as were weak, entertained uncouth thoughts of the other, and looked upon them as no tender walkers, and rashly passed sentence upon them as contemners of strictness, and lovers of licentiousness and liberty.

This division being very scandalous and troublesome, the apostle takes some pains here to remove the same; and therefore, 1. He speaketh to both the weak and the strong, and presseth a more christian, brotherly, harmonious living together, bearing with one another, and construing better of what another doth, and that with many pressing

pressing arguments, to the middle of verse 13. And, 2. He speaks more particularly unto the strong, and presseth them unto a forbearance of the practice of their liberty, in such and such particulars as mared their christian, comfortable and edifying way of living together, and tended to nothing but the stumbling of these weak ones, and to generating of strife and contention. Now, the ground whereupon the apostle goes is this: After the death of Christ, tho' by his death the ceremonial law got its death's wounds, yet was it not instantly taken away: it being so solemnly instituted of God, and observed for such noble ends so long a time, it was to be buried honourably, and so to be carried to its grave leisurely: So that tho' after the death of Christ, who was the substance of all these shadows, the ceremonial law had no obligation upon the consciences of people, that tie was broken; yet it was no sin to practise the same for a time, until the gospel was more fully cleared, and universally published; and therefore during that interval of time, *viz.* betwixt the death of Christ and the full publishing of the gospel, they became morally indifferent, and might either have been practised or not practised, and nothing either urged the practising or not practising of them, but the avoiding of scandal: Hence we see that when Paul is among the Jews, who would have taken offence and exception at him, if he had altogether forborn the practice thereof, he circumciseth Timothy; Acts xvi. 3. and kept some other ceremonial rites, Acts xxi. 21. 22. 23. &c. At another time, when he is among the Gentiles, and sees that his practising these ceremonies would indeed prove scandalous, he forbeareth, and will not circumcise, Gal. ii. 3. And though the Gentiles were never allowed to take on that yoke, Acts xxi. 25. and xv. 1. to 30. yet as that council, Acts xv. did resolve that Gentiles should only forbear the use of their christian liberty in some few particulars, that thereby they might prevent the stumbling of the Jews; so the same doth Paul here; he will have the strong forbear the eating of some meats which the ceremonial law had discharged, to prevent the stumbling of their weak brethren, and so presseth only a ceding in some things for peace's sake, and a forbearance of some acts (which otherways they might have done.) for the good of the weak; and therefore in the last part of the chapter, he speaks only of the meats, and nothing of the other ground, their holy days, because in this they were to act, and in the other only to forbear acting.

VERSE 1. *Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations.*

IN this verse the apostle sets down a general direction to the strong, how to carry themselves toward the weak; that is, how such as had attained to more light and persuasion of the right bounds of their christian liberty, should carry themselves to such as had not as yet win their length, but were filled with doubts and scruples anent the liberty which they ought to make use of; *Him that is weak in the faith*; such an one he would have the strong receive, that is, as the word

importeth, take them near them in intimate fellowship, as Acts xvii. 5. take them in great love and affection with tenderness, as Philem. 12. 17. Acts xxviii. 2. and deal with them, for their instruction, with great kindness, and hearty good-will, as Mark viii. 32. Acts xviii. 26. so he will have the strong lovingly and tenderly dealing with the weak, keeping them in their bosom, and gently binding up their wounds, and helping their weakness. *But not to doubtful disputations*; that is, not to perplex and trouble them with vain, useless and jangling intricacies, and needless debates, that will be so far from edifying and instructing them, that it will rather

tend to entangle them in their doubtings, and foment their scruples.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. All the members of Christ's church are not of one and the same size, but as some are babes in Christ, some old men, and some young, 1 John ii. 12. 13. 14. 1 Tim. iii. 6. Matth. xx. 12. Heb. v. 11. to 14. and vi. 1. some more eminent in faith and other graces, Eph. iii. 17. Rom. iv. 20. so some are of greater knowledge and insight in the matters of God, and things concerning their christian liberty, and others more weak and short-sighted: there are some here who are weak in the faith, *Him that is weak in the faith.* See 1 Cor. viii. 7. 10. 11. and ix. 22. 1 Thess. v. 14. Acts xx. 35.

II. It is the duty of such as are strong, and better acquainted with the nature and extent of their christian liberty than others, not only to forbear to cast them out of their company who cannot win up to conformity with them, and otherways to vex, grieve, and disquiet them; but they ought to have bowels of compassion towards them, and in love and tenderness to bind up their sores, and to receive them into their fellowship with kindness and brotherly love: *Him that is weak, receive ye.* See Gal. vi. 1.

III. Tho' it be commendable for Christians to be much in the study of necessary points of truth, for their edification in the knowledge of God, and in all other questions there lies still a truth on one side; yet it is safest for young beginners, or such as are weak in the faith, to forbear to meddle with such questions as are little to edification, and withal are full of intricacies and uncleaness, which usually are most about matters indifferent, and that at a time wherein offences do most abound: he would not have the weak troubled with *doubtful disputations.* See 1 Tim. i. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 14. 16. 23.

IV. Tho' the stronger be bound to instruct, with all meekness and love, such

as are weak; yet tenderness and love should cause them forbear to entangle them with needless and unprofitable doubtful questions or distinctions: he would have the strong forbearing to *receive the weak to doubtful disputations.*

V. The strong should not think they have discharged their duty sufficiently towards the weak, when they have cleared the ground of their own assings, as they think sufficiently, though afterward they should deal unbrotherly with them for not conforming with them in their practice; but love in the strong should make them forbear to trouble the weak with questions beyond their capacity, or questions intricate, and not very edifying; and tho' the weak cannot win up to the height of their light, yet to be bearing with them, and sweetly and lovingly entertaining them: *Him that is weak receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.*

VERSES 2. 3. *For one believeth that he may eat all things; another who is weak, eateth herbs.*

Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth.---

IN this second verse the apostle seteth down one branch of the controversy then in hand, viz. that about meats. By the ceremonial law there were several meats prohibited to the Jews as unclean, see Lev. xi. throughout; now, among these Christians there were some weak, who could not at the first be drawn from their former practices in abstaining from these unclean meats, and induced to lay aside a law which stood in force so long; and therefore they would be so far from going against that law, that they would abstain altogether from flesh, and would eat nothing but herbs, that so they might be sure not to transgress that law which only prohibited the use of some kinds of flesh, and not of all. There were others again, who

who knew better their freedom, and abſtained from no ſort of fleſh, but believed and were perſuaded that they might eat all things.

In the third verſe the apoſtle ſpeaks a word to both theſe perſons, and gives each an exhortation to their duty, that ſtrife and unchriſtian-like contention might be avoided; And, 1. he ſpeaks to the ſtrong, who eateth all things, and he ſays to him, *Deſpiſe not him that eateth not*; ſuch were ready to undervalue and condemn the weaker, as unworthy to be taken notice of or regarded; and this he ſpeaketh againſt. 2. To the weak he ſays, *Let not him who eateth not, judge him who eateth*: The weak are too ready to paſs ſentence upon the ſtronger, as profane and careleſs, and are often raſh in their judgment; and upon this the debate and heat of contention is kept up upon their part.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As the members of Chriſt's church have not all the ſame degree of knowledge and underſtanding, but ſome have more light than others, ſo upon this diverſity of degrees of knowledge there is diverſity of practices, and ſo this ſhould ſeem no ſtrange thing in the church; for here there were ſome who as *he believed he might eat all ſorts of meats*, ſo he ſcrupled at none; and others who as they believed they might eat but of ſome of the creatures, ſo *they did eat only herbs*.

II. The more chriſtian knowledge people have attained, the greater liberty have they in their walk; and the leſs they have win to, the more are they filled with ſcruples, doubts and fears, and the leſs freedom they have: *One believeth that he may eat all things, another who is weak, eateth herbs*.

III. So great is the ſtrength of corruption even in believers, and ſuch as ſeem to have greateſt knowledge and greateſt tenderneſs, and thereby are ſo wedded unto their own opinions, that by ſticking

unto them, tho' in matters trivial, and indifferent, they ſtand not to occaſion diviſions, jars, and unchriſtian debates, for ſo was it here at Rome, and all about the uſe of indifferent things.

IV. Tho' the more knowledge we have, we ſhould be the more humble, knowing how ſmall a portion of knowledge we have, and how all that we have is freely beſtowed upon us of free grace; yet ſo much are we puffed up with it, if there be not much grace to ballaſt us, 1 Cor. viii. 1. that we are ready to undervalue and lightly eſteem ſuch as are inferior to us in knowledge, tho' poſſibly beyond us in tenderneſs and grace: He that was ſtrong here, and believed that he might eat all things, was *deſpiſing him that eateth not*.

V. So confident are we ordinarily of our own perfection in judgment and practice, that if any go beyond us, and practice that which we have not clearneſs to do, we are ready to paſs a raſh ſentence upon them, as untender, unchriſtian, uncircumſpect, if not profane in their carriage; for ſo did the weak here; *He who did not eat, judged him who eateth*.

VI. Where there is not mutual hearty love and chriſtian charity, to ſympathize with one another, and to conſtrue well of what another doth, and to ſuſpect what we do ourſelves, rather than what others do, there cannot be ſuch amity, peace and concord, as there ought to be among the members of the ſame body; for this was the ground of their diviſion, the ſtrong condemned the weak, and the weak ſuſpected and raſhly judged the ſtrong.

VII. As it can never be imagined that ever all the members of the church of Chriſt ſhall attain unto the ſame degree of underſtanding and clearneſs, and unto the ſame uniformity in practice, in all things; ſo it is the duty of Chriſtians to be joining together, and walking with other in love, each preferring others to themſelves, and more highly eſteeming of them, that ſo neither the one may deſpiſe, condemn,

nor lightly esteem the other, nor the other be rash in censuring and condemning them, especially in the practice of indifferent things; for this is Paul's exhortation, *Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him who eateth.*

VERSES 3. 4. --- *For God hath received him.*

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be bolden up: for God is able to make him stand.

IN these words the apostle is giving three arguments whereby to press the former exhortations: And, 1. *For God hath received him*: It is not lawful nor handsome for you who are strong, to condemn or despise him who is weak; for as weak as he is, God hath not condemned him, but received him in his arms, and made him a member of his church; nor for you who are weak, to judge him that is strong, to be profane, or untender in his walk, seeing God has accepted of him. 2. *To his own master he standeth or falleth*: What hast thou to do to pass a rash and unwarrantable sentence upon another's servant, either as unchristian or contemptible; he is not thy servant, and in his standing or falling he is not accountable to thee, but to his own master. 3. *Yea, he shall be bolden up*: Tho' thou who art strong condemn the weak, and look upon him as a feckless weak one that cannot hold his feet, but stumbleth at every thing, and so cannot but fall; yet since God hath taken him by the hand, he shall not fall; and therefore thou shouldst not carry thyself so towards him: Again, thou who art weak, judgest the stronger one, who is already declining; but know that he shall stand too; and therefore forbear to judge rashly. And this last argument he confirmeth with a reason taken from the almighty power of God; *for God is able to*

make him stand: Thou thinkest it hard, if not impossible, for him to be kept on his feet, that is either so weak or so profane as thou imagineth; but tho' there be no strength in thy neighbour, yet there is power in God for that effect; and since he be one whom God has received, we may be sure God will let forth his strength and power for his supporting: God's ability here takes in his good will.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' there be as many and as strong bonds betwixt Christians as can be; whereupon they might be induced to a sweet, loving and sympathizing fellowship, one with another; yet so mighty is corruption in all, and so busy is Satan to blow at the coals of dissention; that it is no small and easy matter to get Christians brought to a christian and brotherly carriage towards others, when their judgments and practices are different, even tho' but in matters indifferent; for we find here the apostle sees cause to press a christian disposition upon both weak and strong, with many arguments.

II. As a Christian's bearing with others in different practices, about matters indifferent, is most necessary and comely; so should ministers by all means endeavour to procure this among Christians: both these followeth upon the apostle's using so many and so strong arguments here.

III. It is the duty of every Christian to be keeping charitable thoughts towards every member of the visible church, who are not openly declaring their enmity to Christ, by their scandalous and profane life; and to be looking upon them, as really that which they profess to be; for his arguments here used, speak out this much, that we ought to look on our Christian professing neighbour, as *received of God*, and as a servant of his, not only by profession, but really, and as one whom God will take care of.

IV. Were Christians banishing away uncharitable

charitable thoughts of others from themselves, and labouring to entertain the best thoughts of each member of the church of Christ, there would not be so much unchristian-like censuring, judging and despising of others, even tho' of different judgments and practices in matters indifferent, as is clear from the general scope of all his arguments here.

V. Whatever the ignorant, foolish wicked world think of the godly, yet the great God of heaven and earth, hath highly honoured them, and doth highly esteem them, and hath received them into his intimate favour and friendship: *God hath received them.*

VI. Were Christians considering how God had taken even such as could not conform with them in practice, into his favour; they would be loath, either to despise, or yet to be rash in censuring and judging them; but, on the contrary, this would make them look on them with another eye; and that which makes many so untender of, and disrespectful towards their neighbours, who cannot conform with them, is, an unchristian apprehension they have of their want of grace, and so of interest in God, as theirs; for to press them to another christian carriage to one another than was among them, he useth this argument; *For God hath received him.*

VII. As believers have given up themselves to God, and devoted themselves, and their service to him: so the Lord doth look upon them as his servants, and owneth them as standing in such a relation to him; they are *another's* servant, and have their *own master*. See 1 Cor. vi. 20.

VIII. The consideration of this relation which is betwixt God and believers, *viz.* that he is their master, and they his servants, should make all others forbear to call them before the bar of their private judgment, for their acting in things indifferent; so that tho' we ought to be careful of one another, and affected with what another doth; yet we may not pass any

rash and groundless judgment concerning their state; or condemn them for their walking contrary to us, in the use of things indifferent: *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?* See Matth. vii. 1.

IX. Altho' Christians ought not to be altogether regardless of their brethren, so as not to be affected with any thing they do; but ought to rejoice to see them doing well, and be saddened to see them sinning against God; yet they ought not to be so much troubled with the carriage of their neighbours, as if they had no other to be accountable unto but them; but they should look upon them as fellow-servants with themselves, and as accountable only to their master in heaven: *To his own master he standeth or falleth.*

X. Were Christians considering how their brethren are not accountable unto them, for their carriage, they would not be so rash in their judging and censuring of them, for non-conformity with them in the use of indifferent things; and whosoever take upon them to judge their brethren in these practices put themselves in God's room, and challenge to themselves God's prerogative of being sole master and judge of people: *To his own master he standeth or falleth*, is another argument.

XI. However some cannot reach the length that others win to, in the matter of practice in things indifferent, and all Christians cannot win up to a conformity in these matters; yet notwithstanding of this discrepancy and difference both in judgment and practice, anent the use of things indifferent, both such as are accounted by some to be unequal in their carriage, and going the full length of their liberty, and such as are despised as weak, despicable persons, may be kept straight in the main business, and such of them as are elected of God and received into his special favour, shall certainly be kept from stumbling to their souls ruin; and the consideration of this, should make each more back-

backward and unwilling to censure and condemn another for non-conformity with them in such matters; for this is the other argument, *Yea, he shall be bolden up.*

XII. Howbeit we be ready enough to account it a matter near by impossible, that a soul should be streight and honest in the main, and yet differ from us in the matters of indifferency; yet the consideration of the mighty power of God, which is engaged for all his own beloved ones, should settle and rectify us as to these thoughts; therefore to confirm this, that he shall be bolden up, he addeth, *for God is able to make him stand.*

VERSE 5. *One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

IN the next place, he sets down the other part of the debate among these young converts, viz. that which was anent the keeping of days: *One man*, says he, *esteemeth one day above another*; there is some among you who carry some respect unto such holy days as were enjoined by the ceremonial law, such as the new moons, pasch, pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles, and the like, and look upon them still as holier than the rest: Others think that that law is now in no force, and look upon all such days as being no more holy than the rest; and therefore in their walk put no difference betwixt these and others. And then he addeth an exhortation tending to peace, *Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind*; as-if he had said, You cannot all agree about the practice of those things in themselves indifferent, but one keepeth some holy days, others keep none; let every one of you so walk as ye may be accepted of God, and may expect his good-will and reward; and this ye will do when ye are persuaded in your own minds that ye may do or forbear what ye do or forbear, and not sin against God,

when ye are sure of your warrant from God, so that ye do not any thing in that matter doubtingly, or out of an intention to dishonour and wrong God. And in this direction there is a new argument couched up, whereby to press all of them to bear with, and to have a good estimation of, another, notwithstanding of a difference in the practice of these indifferent things; for tho' there be not a full and complete conformity, yet it is not very material, providing each be persuaded in his own mind of the lawfulness and expediency of what he doth; and seeing if this persuasion be, neither their conformity nor their non-conformity will be dishonour unto God, none should either judge or despise one another.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. In actions about matters indifferent, it is no uncouth thing to see Christians walking after distinct ways, and each following their own light; for here *one man esteemed one day above another, and another esteemed each day alike.*

II. When there is such divisions among Christians, anent the practising of things indifferent, it is not the safest course to press them unto absolute and full conformity to one another, in the practice of either the one or the other; for the apostle never falleth upon this, to press all to a conformity and complete uniformity, but leaveth every man to his own liberty, except in the case of scandal, as we shall hear in the latter part of this chapter.

III. Tho' Christians ought not to be pressed to an absolute uniformity in matters indifferent, yet ought they to labour after distinctness and clearness in what they do; and to know that they are allowed of God to do the thing (in itself indifferent) which they do, and to forbear what they do forbear, and to do nothing contemptuously, or out of disrespect, but out of a persuasion of the lawfulness and expediency of what they do: *Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

IV. It is not enough that that which a man doth, be a thing either commanded or indifferent, and so lawful upon the matter; but it is requisite that he go about the action in a right manner, upon the ground of a warrant from God, and a warrant cleared to his own conscience, which ought to be often consulted: He should *be fully persuaded in his own mind*; and so ought to consider all circumstances, and thereby try whether their doing or forbearing such an indifferent thing will *hic et nunc* be to God's glory, and the edification of others, or not; and so accordingly do or forbear.

V. Seeing our acting or not acting in things indifferent, may tend to the glory of God, if it be so and so circumstantiated; and when we singly aim at the honour of God, and the good of others, and for this cause seriously ponder and exactly consider all circumstances, our doing or not doing will be accepted of God; therefore it is the duty of each Christian to be constructing well of what another doth, and not to undervalue or rashly condemn them, tho' differing from them in practice; for this may be looked on as a new argument to press the weak to forbear to judge the strong, and the strong to forbear to condemn the weak, that *every one should be fully persuaded in his own mind*.

VERSE 6. *He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

THIS verse holds forth a fifth argument to press both the weak and the strong to a sober, christian, respective carriage to one another, which may be taken up thus, Christians ought to have a single eye unto the glory and honour of God in their carriage, even about indif-

ferent things; and every one of you ought to have such a charitable construction of another, as to suppose that he doth indeed walk so singly, for none of you knows the heart and mind of another; and so, for any thing you know, he doth indeed intend the honour of God, both in keeping and *regarding a day*, and in *not regarding a day*; it is done *unto the Lord*. Both the strong, who account each day alike, forbear to keep any other day as holy unto the Lord now under the gospel, than such as he hath commanded, *viz.* the sabbath or the Lord's day, knowing that the yoke of the ceremonial law is now loosed, and so forbear in obedience to God, and in forbearing do level at the glory of God: So doth he eat all sort of meats without difference, and therein also aimeth at the honour of God, in giving him thanks, both for the benefit, and the liberty to use the same. And, upon the other hand, the weak, who had not win that length as to esteem all days alike, thought that yet he was bound to keep those days appointed by the law, and in so doing he singly aimeth at the glory of God: So in his not eating these meats prohibited by the law, he had an eye towards the Lord, for he giveth God thanks even for the small portion he hath from him: and therefore seeing every Christian, be he weak or be he strong, do he, or do he not, is (for any thing thou who art his neighbour knoweth to the contrary,) singly aiming at God's glory, or at least ought so to do, no body ought to judge him who observeth not a day, and eateth of every meat; nor despise him who observeth a day, and cannot have liberty to eat as the other.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' before the death of Christ, who was the substance of all the ceremonial law, and the butt towards which it pointed, there was a necessity of observing the same by reason of a command; yet now
after

after the death of Christ until the full promulgation of the gospel of peace, it became morally indifferent, and might have been observed or not observed by the Jews during that interval, as, considering all circumstances, was found to be most convenient; for both he that did observe it, and he that did not observe it, might have done it to the Lord, which could not be, unless the keeping thereof during that time had been morally indifferent: *He that observeth a day, observeth it to the Lord; and he who observeth not a day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.*

II. Tho' there be many actions in their specific nature left indifferent, so that in respect of their specific nature they be neither commanded nor forbidden, in which the kingdom of heaven doth not consist, verse 17. and which commendeth us not unto God, so that neither if we do are we the better, nor if we forbear are we the worse, 2 Cor. viii. 8.; yet there is no action of a Christian, but, if all circumstances be noticed, and the same considered in its individual nature, as so and so circumstantiated, is either prohibited or allowed of God, and so lawful or unlawful; for tho' the observing of days, or forbearing of some sorts of meat, was at this time indifferent, as to their specific nature, yet when these actions came to be individuated, there was necessary a respect to God's glory, and this made the observing or not observing (together with other circumstances,) approven of God, and this (all other things being alike,) was enough to cast the ballance: *He that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord, &c.*

III. A Christian should be so taken up with the glory of God, that, in all his actions, even about matters indifferent, he should aim and level at that with singleness of heart: *He that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord, &c.* See 1 Cor. x. 31. Col. iii. 17.

IV. Tho' at that time it was indifferent to have used all meats, or to have for-

born the use of some prohibited by the ceremonial law, and even the Gentiles were prohibited the use of some meats, in the case of scandal, Acts xv. 20. yet now after the gospel is clearly held forth, Christ the end of the law, clearly preached, and the temple destroyed; it is utterly unlawful now, to rob Christians of their liberty which Christ has purchased for them, and enjoin the abstinence from meats, upon any religious score, seeing that would be accounted will-worship and superstition, Col. ii. 20. 21. 22. 23. and is accounted by the apostle a doctrine of devils, 1 Tim. iv. 1. 3. and blamed even in an apostle, Gal. ii. 14. it was but during this time that the apostle spoke this, *He that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not.*

V. Tho' then it was true that he *who regarded a day, did regard it unto the Lord*, and so it was morally indifferent, whether to keep, with a religious intention as a piece of worship, the days set apart by God in the ceremonial law, or not, until the full time when they should have been buried; yet it is utterly unlawful now to keep any day holy (except the Lord's day, which is now become our Christian Sabbath) as holy in itself, by virtue of any dedication, or sequestration, whether to Christ's nativity, ascension and the like, or to saints; as a passing from that liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, Gal. v. 1. and contrary to an express command, Gal. iv. 9. 10. *But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, wherunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.* See Col. ii. 16. It was but during that time that this was true, that *he that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord, &c.*

VI. It is a piece of that honour which we owe to God, and should aim at in the use of his good creatures, have we them allowed to us in great abundance, or in more scarcity, to be acknowledging him
the

the giver, and asking his blessing with them, and heartily to be rendering him the calves of our lips, and expressing our thankfulness to him for them; for as thankfulness is called for always, Col. iii. 17. and iv. 2. 1 Thess. v. 18. so then when we are receiving of his good creatures, 1 Tim. iv. 4. 5. The apostle proveth that both *he who eateth, and he who eateth not, did it to the Lord, because they gave God thanks.*

VII. Tho' weak Christians cannot reach the length of others in many duties or actions; yet they may win to as much honesty, sincerity, and singleness of heart in aiming at the glory of God; for he *who respected a day, and did not eat, did it to the Lord, as well as he who respected not a day, and did eat.*

VIII. The charitable construction that each Christian should have of the sincere and christian intentions of another, in actions wherein they differ from them (being but indifferent) should move and provoke each to forbear the censuring, or vilipending of another; for this is the force of the apostle's argument.

VERSES 7. 8. 9. *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

IN these verses the apostle is further illustrating and confirming the former argument, and shewing how believers, be they weak or be they strong do (or at least ought to) eye God and his glory in all their actions, and to eat or to forbear eating unto the Lord; to regard or not regard a day unto the Lord; and so he beginneth this with a *for*, saying, *For none of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to*

himself; none of us believers, be we weak or strong, do (or ought to) propose ourselves as our ultimate end in life or death; and again this is cleared and confirmed by the contrary, ver. 8. *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, &c.* and so we being his, should eye him only, and propose him as our end in all we do, whether in prosperity or adversity, and in life and death we are his; and this is proven in ver. 9. *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*: Christ has purchased this dominion at a great rate; he died and rose again that he might have an absolute dominion over believers; he died to purchase this dominion; he rose as a victor over death, and took possession of his dominion; and he revived, and liveth for ever, that he might exerce this dominion over them.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' the Lord alloweth his people a moderate care for the body, and what concerneth its welfare, in subordination to what should be their main end; yet nothing concerning their welfare in a world should be the ultimate end at which they should mainly aim; and in subordination to which, they should go about their worldly affairs: *None of us liveth to himself*; they should wholly deny themselves in pleasures, profits and honours, Luke ix. 23. See Phil. ii. 21.

II. Tho' there be much inordinate self-love, and too eager desire after the things of a world, even in the best; yet there is a great change wrought in believers; that whereas before their conversion they were wholly sold to the world, and devoted to seek their own things therein, now it is not so with them; they have a more noble and high end proposed, and have postponed that which before was the chief thing of their aim and desire: tho' now and then temptation prevails to the contrary, yet themselves are not their end, when they

are at themselves: *None of us liveth to himself*; that is, None of us believers are so taken up with ourselves, as if we had no other end to level at.

III. As believers are not their own while living, so neither are they masterless when in affliction and dying: *No man dieth to himself*.

IV. Believers being now changed from nature to grace, and so having, as it were, changed countries, they have changed also masters, and now they have their Lord Redeemer for their Lord and Master, and their life and all their actions are now regulated by his laws, and carried on in subordination to his honour and glory: *Whether we live, it is unto the Lord*.

V. Whosoever are proposing themselves, and their own welfare, as their ultimate end, such are not living unto the Lord; for none can serve two contrary masters, such as *Self*, and the *Lord* are; and the main thing which keeps folks from proposing the Lord and his glory, as their end and scope, is their inordinate self-love, and driving at that mainly; for these two are opposed here; and there is no mids betwixt living to ourselves, and living to the Lord; so that whoever is not living to the Lord, is certainly eyeing himself as his end: *Whether we live, we live unto the Lord*.

VI. So single-hearted, self-denied and dead to themselves should believers be, that as they should not act for themselves, but give themselves wholly to the service of their Lord and Master; so, in his service, they should not stand to hazard all they have; and, when he calleth, to lay down their very life, when it may tend to the glory of his name: *Whether we die, we die unto the Lord*.

VII. As believers are wholly devoted unto the service of the Lord, and ought to eye his honour and advantage mainly; so the Lord owneth them as his; there is a standing relation betwixt him and them, and this is the ground of their service to

him: *Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*.

VIII. This relation that is betwixt Christ and believers, is a fixed, standing, permanent relation; no ups and downs in believers can alter it, no changes of dispensations, yea nor death itself, which puts an end to all other relations, and looseth all other obligations, as husband and wife, Rom. vii. 2. master and servant, &c. This conjunction and relation abides fresh even after death: *Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*. See Matth. xxii. 32.

IX. The Lord Jesus Christ, the second person in the Trinity, took on our nature, and not the nature of angels, Heb. ii. 16. and was made a little lower than the angels, Heb. ii. 7. 9. and tho' he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, Phil. ii. 6. 8. *Christ died*.

X. As Christ having by his death satisfied justice, so as the Father could call for no more at his hands, was therefore let go out of prison, yea and taken out by the Father, Phil. ii. 9. 10. so being God as well as man, he, by his own power, brake thro' the bonds of death, and raised himself up to life; as he died, *so he rose and revived*.

XI. Though Jesus Christ as God had power and dominion over all creatures, being the work of his own hands, Col. i. 16. John i. 3. and that from the beginning; yet he hath moreover a peculiar dominion over the elect and believers, as Mediator and their Head and Husband; he is now in a peculiar manner Lord and Commander of his church and chosen people, giving them laws, ruling them by his Spirit, quickening and defending them: *That he might be Lord both of the dead and living*.

XII. This Lordship and dominion is brought about and acquired by the means of God's work of Mediation and mediation, purchased by his death, for by it he bought a people to himself; and put in exercise by his glorification: *To this end Christ*

Chriſt both died, roſe again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.

XIII. As the conſideration of the dear price which Chriſt laid down to purchaſe the elect to himſelf, ſhould put believers to be more ſerviceable to him; ſo may it aſcertain them, that the relation they have to him ſhall not have an end, but ſhall ſtand in force even after death; to prove that *whether we die or live, we are the Lord's*, he ſays, *for to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, &c.*

VERSES 10. 11. 12. *But why doſt thou judge thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? for we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt. For it is written, As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God. So then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God.*

THe apoſtle's laſt argument is taken from the conſideration of the dreadful day of judgment that is coming, wherein every perſon and every church-member, be they weak or be they ſtrong, ſhall give up their accounts, and answer for all that they have done in the fleſh; and therefore he adviſeth all of them to forbear their judging or cenſuring one another; and he ſpeaketh to them both, *Why doſt thou judge thy brother?* that is, the weak; and then to the ſtrong he ſays, *Or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt;* none of us ſhall eſcape at that day: now this he proveth out of Iſa. xiv. 23. and maketh uſe of the meaning of the prophet, (for tho' the word's differ, the ſenſe is the ſame); *As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God.* The Lord by the prophet is calling on all nations to take notice of his power and God-head, and to lay hold on him, who is the only true God, able to

help them in all their neceſſities, and uſeth this argument, *I have ſworn, &c.* that is, All fleſh ſhall be forced to acknowledge me, and do me homage by ſubmitting to me, bowing the knee, and ſo externally profeſſing their worſhipping of me, and ſwearing by me, or avouching their owning of me as Lord, and profeſſing this; now, this the apoſtle applyeth to the laſt judgment, becauſe it is certainly there included. Then he concludes, ver. 12. *So then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God;* none ſhall eſcape tryal then. So that in this one main argument there are many others couched, as 1. It is unnatural that each of you ſhould judge or deſpiſe another, for you are brethren one to another. 2. It is an anticipating of the judgment of the great day. 3. It is an encroachment on Chriſt's prerogative, who ſhall be judge both of quick and dead in that day. And 4. It is needleſs, for every one will be forced to make answer then, and none ſhall eſcape. 5. It were better that each of us were looking to himſelf, and preparing.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Believers, whether they be ſtrong or weak, are all members of one family, having all one Father, the God of heaven; all one Lord Jeſus to their elder brother, being all begotten by the word of God; he who is deſpiſed is a brother, as well as he who is judged.

II. It is the looking upon one another with a ſtern countenance, and not as brethren, that makes each have ſuch harſh cenſures and thoughts of another; and were chriſtian believers keeping up the affection of brethren, and looking on others as equally dear to God and related to Chriſt as themſelves, they would be loth to harbour any ſiniſter thoughts, or uncharitable apprehenſions of another, tho' differing from them in the practice of indifferent things; *Why doſt thou judge thy brother? or why deſpiſeſt thou thy brother?*

III. It is no uncomon thing (tho' most unnatural) to see, even Christians, so hot about matters of small moment, as is the use of things indifferent, as to break out in unchristian and uncharitable censures, casting others, so far as in them lieth, not only out of the church, but even out of God's love and favour. The strong here despised the weaker, as contemptible, unworthy to be regarded; the weak again judged the strong as graceless, and unworthy to be imitated: *Why dost thou thus judge thy brother? or why despisest thou thy brother?*

IV. It is the little minding of that dreadful day of judgment that is coming that makes Christians so careless in their walk, and so rash in censuring and condemning others, otherways they would be more taken up with themselves and their own walk, and be loth to take upon them what is Christ's prerogative: this is the force of the apostle's argument whereby he would dissuade them from judging one another: *We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.* See 1 Cor. iv. 5.

V. Tho' God doth oftentimes execute judgment in this earth upon wicked doers, yet because he doth not so always, nor doth he fully execute his wrath upon the wicked, but often times suffereth the righteous to be wronged; therefore there is a general day of judgment coming, appointed of God to be, wherein he will judge righteous judgment: *We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.* See Matth. xxv. 31. &c. John xii. 48. Acts xvii. 31. 2 Thess. i. 6. Heb. vi. 2. 2 Cor. v. 10. Jude 6.

VI. Tho' men now think little of Christ, but do despise and every way undervalue him, yet the self same despised Lord Mediator shall be their Judge in that great day: *We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.* See John v. 22. 27. Acts x. 42. and xvii. 31. Rom. ii. 16. 2 Tim. iv. 1.

VII. It shall not be man alone which

people shall have to do with in that day, tho' that will be dreadful enough, considering how he hath all power given to him of God, and how God hath exalted him, and subjected all things unto him, 2 Cor. xv. 27. but they shall have to do with God, who is able to rip up their secrets, and hath infinite power to render to every one his due, and to execute the sentence pronounced; for tho' this judgment shall be gone about in a visible form, by Christ in his human nature, Acts xvii. 31. Matth. xxviii. 18. yet God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the principal cause thereof, Dan. vii. 9. 10. in respect of the authority by which the sentence is pronounced, and the power by which it is executed; and therefore, verse 12. it is said, *We shall render an account unto God.* See Acts xvii. 31. Rom. ii. 16.

VIII. Tho' Christ Jesus, at his first coming into the world, was meek as a lamb, not opening his mouth; yet when he cometh again unto judgment, he shall be glorious in majesty, and dreadful unto the proudest wretch that stepeth; he shall come with a notable train of angels, 2 Thess. i. 7. and shall set himself upon a stately throne of glory, Matth. xix. 28. *We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.* See 2 Cor. v. 10. Matth. xxv. 31.

IX. Before this Judge, who will accept of no man's person, no man shall be excused from appearing, but all flesh, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, good and bad, strong and weak, quick and dead, shall all be presented before this dreadful Lord: *We shall all appear.* See Rev. xx. 12. Acts x. 42. There is no exception of persons with God.

X. Tho' men may find ways to shift human judicatories, yet there shall none, no not the greatest, be able to shift the judgment of that day, but all they will they, they shall be impannelled and sited before the tribunal; for the word in the original which is rendered *appear*, signifieth a judicial sitting, and impannelling, or a forcing

forcing of men before a judge to be judged, for it is a judicial word borrowed from courts and places of judgment: *We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.* See Rev. xx. 13. Matth. xxv. 32. and xiii. 39.

XI. At that day there will be an exact inquisition made after all a man's actions; and as he who shall be Judge in that day is God, who knoweth the secrets of all things, so shall all these be disclosed, and man must answer to God for his actions, 2 Cor. v. 10. all his words, Matth. xii. 37. and for all his thoughts, Rom. ii. 16.; the books wherein all is written must be opened, Rev. xx. 12.; we must give an account of our judging and despising our brother, which may be by thoughts, words, and deeds; so that *every one of us shall give an account of himself.*

XII. Tho' now men and women be ready to smoothe over and colour their actions, and to put the best excuse they can invent upon them, yet in that day, as all things will be brought to light, so every word, thought, and action, will be exactly sifted, examined, and tried by the law of God, whether it be the law of nature, Rom. ii. 5. 6. 12. the law moral, 2 Cor. v. 10. or the law of the gospel, Rom. ii. 16. John xii. 48.; making up of an account doth suppose this: *We shall give an account of ourselves to God.*

XIII. Tho' we should not altogether lay aside the care of our neighbour's welfare, yet we should mainly be taken up with searching and trying our own state and condition, knowing that at the day of judgment we will be mainly questioned for ourselves, and for our own actions, and will not be accountable for others, save in so far as by our sinful actions or omissions we have occasioned their fall: *Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.*

From the passage cited ver. 11. OBSERVE,

I. The word of God is the only rule of faith and manners, and to it should we ap-

peal in all controverted points of truth, because therein there is only ground for a conscience to settle on; and in points not controverted but commonly received, being most necessary and useful, it is good to look on these as pressed immediately by God, that the impression may be the more deep and lasting, and to take even these obvious truths as spoken by the Lord, that the false heart may know no way of shifting: therefore doth he prove, that all flesh must appear before God at the great day, by a scripture, saying, *For it is written.*

II. So complete and full a canon is the word, and so perfect, that very consequences, natively and clearly deduced therefrom, are to be looked on as of everlasting truth, and of divine authority, as well as what is set down in plain terms; the penmen thereof being guided immediately and acted by the infallible Spirit to set down the very words and sentences in such and such an order: for that which the apostle is here proving, followeth upon these words of Isaiah by consequence only, at least the prophet doth not speak in plain terms of the day of judgment, of which the apostle is speaking expressly.

III. Our Lord Jesus Christ is God equal with the Father in power and glory. Phil. ii. 6. having the same Godhead, and being of the same substance with him: for here not only is he who is called *Christ*, verse 10. called *God*, verse 12. but all that the prophet speaks of Jehovah, Isa. xlv. 22. 23. 24. the apostle here applieth to Christ; *As it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, &c.* and so he is declared the object of adoration.

IV. Tho' he who is the God of truth cannot lye, and so whatever he says be certainly true, and ought undoubtedly to be believed; yet it hath seemed good in the Lord's eyes, because of our backwardness to believe, and readiness to question even such truths as are most necessary for us to believe and rely upon, to set to his

his oath to seal and confirm some truths: *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow, &c.*

V. That Christ Jesus shall be still more and more exalted, till at length his very enemies shall be made his footstool, Psalm cx. 1. and all flesh shall be forced, even such as are most refractory, to subject themselves unto this great Lord and Commander, is a truth that flesh and blood can hardly digest, and be fully persuaded of, or at least will never heartily close with; and therefore the Lord hath thought good to confirm it with an oath: *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

VI. The Lord Jehovah, of whom all other creatures have their being and dependence, hath his being in and of himself, and therefore it is his prerogative only to swear by his life: *As I live, saith the Lord*; He sweareth by himself, because he hath not a greater, Heb. vi. 13.

VII. The Lord Jesus our Mediator, who is God and man in one person, is to be worshipped, adored, and subjected unto by all; *Every knee shall bow before him, and every tongue confess him*: And by this bowing of the knee is meant, subjection, and reverent religious worship and adoration.

VIII. The Lord calleth not only (tho' mainly) for internal adoration, and spiritual worship, by the gracious habits of grace put in exercise, so as he shall be loved, feared, &c. above all; but also for the outward expression of this in signs and gestures of the body, suitable unto and naturally flowing from the stirrings of these inward affections: *Every knee shall bow.*

IX. Tho' the Lord alloweth not his people to play the hypocrite, and shew forth more than is inwardly in the heart, nor to be proud and conceited, or vain-glorious; yet he alloweth his people, in time and place convenient, to make open declaration of their owning Christ as their Lord, and to profess their subjection and adherence to him; for as *every knee should*

bow, so every tongue should confess to him, or confess him.

X. Tho' many press more for this external gesture and outward sign of spiritual worship and adoration than for what is more inward, and should be the rise of that, and others lay more weight upon it, and are therefore more taken up therewith; yet it is no infallible sign of inward grace in the heart, for it is here told that it shall be the gesture of both good and bad: *Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess*; even all who shall be judged in the last day.

XI. Tho' oftentimes the enemies of Christ be raised high up, and they have Christ, in his followers and cause, far under their feet, and think to be victorious still; yet Jesus Christ shall at length be great, and exalted very high above the neck of all his enemies, and all flesh shall extol him; for this is a prophecy, and the last accomplishment thereof will not be till the day of judgment; then every knee shall bow; the godly shall heartily then avow their subjection unto him; and the wicked shall be forced to adore and reverence him as their dreadful Judge: *Every knee shall bow, &c.*

XII. Whatever civil honour, reverence and respect may be given to men in high place, by bowing of the knee, yet there is nothing the proper object of spiritual worship and divine adoration but God; so that to worship any other thing with divine worship is rank idolatry, forbidden in the first Command; and to worship this God any other way than he has commanded, is sinful superstition forbidden in the second Command: And so we ought not to kneel (as thereby we express any religious worship,) at the name *Jesus*, for that is but so many letters and syllables, and not a Diety; nor worship God at the hearing of that name pronounced, and at no other name, for this is no where commanded; for that place, Phil. ii. 9. 10. *At the name of Jesus every knee should bow,*

bow, &c. is parallel with this; and here, not the name of Jesus is made the object, either *quod* or *quo*, but himself; *Every knee shall bow to me*; that is, him who lives in and of himself, and has sworn this; and in that same place of the Philippians, himself is named also, as is clear from the parallel place of Isa. xlv. 23. and because it is meant of him who was exalted with power and glory, or of his glory which he got by being exalted; for this is the *name above every name*, and it is that to which *very devils bow*, and that is his power: *Every knee shall bow to me*.

VERSE 13. *Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.*

AFTER a transition from the former purpose, by a conclusion drawn from his foregoing arguments, *viz.* *Let us not therefore judge one another any more*, the apostle sets down an exhortation, and useth a notable *antanaclasis*, saying, *But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, &c.* which exhortation is mainly directed unto the stronger, whom he would have forbearing the use of these meats (for of this part of the dispute he mainly insisteth on here,) in this particular case, wherein the weak were thereby scandalized. This being the hypothesis, the apostle prosecuteth the point in way of a general thesis *viz.* That in case of scandal the use of indifferent things should be forbidden; and for this cause he useth several arguments; unto the end of this chapter.

In this verse there are two arguments touched upon; 1st. From the nature of the deed, for which he useth two expressions much to the same purpose, in calling it, 1. *a stumbling-block*; and, 2. *an occasion to fall*, (which expressions usually go together, 1 Pet. ii. 8. 1 Cor. viii. 5. compared with ver. 12. Rom. ix. 33. Isa. viii. 14) the one importing or signifying properly a stone

lying in ones way, whereupon he may or doth dash his feet; the other properly, the bridge in a trap, which, when touched, occasioneth the hurt or taking of the rat or mouse; and so both holding forth that possible or actual stumbling, halting, or hurting of the weak through the practice of the strong; and seeing it is so dangerous to our neighbour in this case to use such indifferent things, it were far better to forbear them. The 2^d argument is in the word *brethren*; he or she, how weak soever in grace and knowledge, is and ought to be looked on as thy brother, and so it were unnatural for thee to do any thing tending to his hurt.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Such weight should be laid upon light and instruction received, that we should therefore forbear these practices which we have been accustomed with formerly, after sight and discovery of their sinfulness; least afterward our sin become greater; John ix. 41. James iv. 17. and our judgment more grievous, Prov. i. 26. Luke xii. 47.: therefore he concludes, *Let us not therefore judge one another any more.*

II. There is such an evil too rife oftentimes amongst Christians, as scandalizing, or occasioning the hurt, sin, stumbling, and retarding of others in the way of Christianity: *Judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.* See 1 Cor. viii. 7.

III. This sin of scandalizing, or giving offence, is when any thing is done, spoken or omitted unduely, whereby our neighbour is induced, or an occasion is laid for him, to halt, stumble, or fall, in his way; for it is called *a stumbling-block*, or any thing in ones way against which he is ready to stumble, and *an occasion to fall*, or offence, a scandal, or that which is inductive unto sin; and so it is that which may mar the spiritual edification of our brother: For this much doth these borrowed expressions point forth.

IV. As there is a scandal only taken when one carpeth at, and is offended with another's doing of what is necessary, as, Matth. xv. 12.; so there is a scandal only given by laying that before another which is apt to cause or occasion the fall of another, tho' that other doth not actually fall thereby, as Matth. xvi. 23. and there is a scandal both given and taken, when this is laid before one, which is not only apt to occasion another's stumbling, but at which the other doth actually, through his corruption, stumble and fall, Gal. ii. 13. and both these last may be here meant, and both, even the very scandal given only, are to be shunned; the very putting of a stumbling-block before our brother is to be guarded against: *Judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, &c.*

V. As there are some scandals in matter of opinion, when either an untruth is defended, whereby others are taught to err, Matth. v. 19. or a sinful practice and deed is pleaded for, Rev. ii. 14. 15.; so is there scandal given by external practice which is inductive unto sin; such was this here, a scandal given by eating such and such meats: *That no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way.*

VI. Not only is this offence and scandal given, by doing that which is simply sinful and unlawful, or only by that which hath some appearance of evil, 1 Theff. v. 17. Phil. iv. 8. 9. Gal. ii. 3. but also by doing that which is otherways lawful and indifferent; as was this eating of meats forbidden by the ceremonial law, which at other times and in other places had been lawful enough, yet, *hic et nunc*, when the weak were in hazard of stumbling thereat, even the practice of this indifferent thing is called *a putting a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way.* See 1 Cor. viii. and x.

VII. The practice of a thing indifferent may be inductive unto sin, and so scandalous, notwithstanding the practiser hath no intention to scandalize, but rather,

upon the contrary, may intend their edification and growth in knowledge, as Matth. xvi. 22. 23.: For here, notwithstanding that the eater might intend the edification of the weak, by instructing them in their christian liberty, and no way intend their hurt, yet their eating in this case is scandalous, and called *a stumbling-block, and an occasion to fall.*

VIII. That, among other things, which maketh the use of indifferent things become scandalous is, when thereby occasion is given to others to speak or think evil of them or their profession, and to account or judge them profane; and when others are thereby induced to act contrary to their own light, and to think that lawful which they think unlawful; at least to wrong the peace and quietness of their consciences; for upon these and such like scores, is the eating of the strong here called *a stumbling-block, &c.* because thereby the weak were made to judge them as untender, verse 10. and to doubt of their own acting, or to act contrary to their own light, &c.

IX. There is so much corruption remaining in God's own children, as makes them too ready so to stumble at what others do, as that they shall be all put in confusion, the light of their judgments darkened with doubts and scruples, the serenity and calmness of conscience banished with cross sentences and peremptory decrees; the sedate condition of the affections disturbed with grief, or the like; and thus to stumble not only at what is sinful, or at least hath appearance of evil with it, but even at what is in itself indifferent: for thus the weak, tho' gracious, were in hazard of stumbling, and of being offended.

X. So hateful, detestable and dangerous a thing is it for one to be guilty of scandalizing his neighbour, Matth. xviii. 7. that the consideration thereof should be a strong motive to stir all up to guard against the same, and for this cause to forbear, not only

only what is sinful or needless, but even what is lawful or indifferent, and in some respect useful and profitable: tho' they ought not for fear of this to shun or forbear any necessary duty, yet ought they to forbear the use of things in themselves indifferent, tho' otherways lawful: therefore to dissuade the strong from eating of such meats, he calleth it a *puting of a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in our brothers way*. See 1 Cor. ix. 19. 20. &c. 2 Cor. vi. 3.

XI. Were we fostering brotherly affection in our hearts towards others, whether within or without the church, we would be careful to abstain from what is not absolutely necessary, and would be loth to lay traps, or spread gins, before any, by our carriage: therefore he useth this argument to dissuade them from the use of these indifferent things, *viz. that it was a puting of a stumbling-block before their brother*. See 1 Cor. x. 32.

XII. So hard a matter is it, to take up aright the nature of the action, to ponder aright all the circumstances which may have weight to vary the case, to understand thoroughly all the doubts, questions and scruples which might be raised in and about the practice of indifferent things, and what our carriage should be in a time when offences abound, that it would take up a man's whole study to learn how to walk evenly and straightly among such difficulties, and to guard against scandalizing, and putting an occasion of falling in our brother's way: for he says, *judge this rather*; that is, try and examine yourself and actions, and so level them that they may not give offence; *Judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, &c.*

VERSE 14. *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*

BEfore he proceeds to other arguments, he takes away an objection in this verse: It might be said by the strong, We know that now since Christ is come, the commonness or uncleanness of meats is taken away, and there is now no such difference as was made by the ceremonial law; and were it not better then, that we should walk conform to our christian liberty, and that they should endeavour to win up to us, than that we should quit our liberty for them? To this the apostle answereth, granting the antecedent, *viz. that now the difference is removed*, I know, says he, and am persuaded of it, and that by the illumination of the Spirit of Jesus, that there is no meat now unclean of itself, and that the ceremonial uncleanness is now removed; but he denieth the consequence, and saith, Notwithstanding hereof it is better for you to condescend to them, than that they should come up to you, for it will be no sin for you to condescend and cede from your liberty, but it will be sin in them; *for to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean*: If he, in his erroneous conscience, shall esteem those meats prohibited, he may not meddle with them, for in this case even his erroneous conscience binds up his hands.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' it seemed good in the Lord's eyes to hedge in the people of the Jews with rails, and deny them the free use of his good creatures, for diverse ends, and so bind up their hands from several of them, the more to inure them to obedience, in a way suitable to their non-age; yet God hath thought good to enlarge the border of our christian liberty, and to grant now to his church under the gospel, greater freedom, as to a church come to age, and now there is nothing unclean of itself, (tho' to the unbelieving every thing be unclean, Tit. i. 15.) but of every good

creature we may now eat freely: *I know, and am persuaded, that there is nothing unclean of itself.* See Acts x. 15. 1 Tim. iv. 4. 5.

II. Tho' men by pains and industry may win a great length in the knowledge of some points of truth, yet the clearest up-taking and discovery of truths, and the fullest persuasion is by the Spirit of God; and when the Spirit of the Lord Jesus enlighteneth a soul, then all doubts and scruples are banished, and the man wins up to a full persuasion: *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus.*

III. Tho' when an erroneous conscience takes that to be sinful which is a necessary duty, or that to be a duty which is sinful, it only binds the man from acting contrary to the light of his conscience, (and this it doth because that conscience is God's deputy, and when it is contravened the authority of God is contravened, for what it holdeth forth, it holdeth forth as God's mind, and in God's name and authority; and for any thing the man knows it may be so,) but doth not lay on an obligation to act accordingly; yet when it takes that to be sinful, which is but lawful or indifferent, it not only binds but obligeth the man to act accordingly; so that he must not do that which, tho' lawful in itself, yet is represented to him as sinful, but must abstain from it as sinful: *To him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean;* it not being in itself sinful to forbear the practice of what is lawful, but not necessary, or only indifferent.

IV. Because the weak may not cross their own conscience, and do that which in conscience they judge sinful and unlawful, and the strong may well forbear the practice of what is but indifferent, therefore it is most agreeable to christian equity and reason, that the stronger should condescend unto the weak: this is the substance of the apostle's answer.

VERSE 15. *But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not cha-*

ritably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

THE apostle proceedeth to press the stronger to abstain from the use of those meats, which otherways, when his brother would not be scandalized, offended, or grieved, he might lawfully eat, and maketh use of three other arguments here; as, 1. *If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably;* that is, If thy eating of meats, sometime forbidden by the ceremonial law, trouble, vex and grieve the conscience of thy weak brother, thou oughtst to forbear, otherways thou transgressest the laws of charity, and walkest most uncharitably. 2. Thou art a soul-murderer, a destroyer with thy meat, and one that strikes in with the devil, whose work it is to destroy souls, and therefore has the name of a *destroyer*, Rev. xix. 11. 3. Thou counterworkest Christ, and labourest to undermine his work; he came to save souls, yea, and laid down his life to save souls, he bought these, (for any thing thou knowest to the contrary,) with his precious blood, and thou by thy carriage dost what in thee lieth to rob him of them: *Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is a scandalizing and giving of offence unto our brother, to do any thing whereby ground or occasion is given of marring his spiritual joy and rejoicing, sadening his heart, and making him go softly and walk heavily, and to be grieved at us and our carriage; for what before, ver. 13. he called a *putting of a stumbling-block, and occasion of offence in our brother's way*, he here calleth a *grieving of our brother*; *But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat.*

II. So rash and untender are many Christians in their walk, that they care little to mar the spiritual good of their brethren, and to put them to much perplexity, disquietness of mind, and grief of spirit.

spirit, by their use of such things as are not very necessary, but at most indifferent, if they can have any cloke of liberty and seen advantage thereby; and so ready are Christians to halt in their race of spiritual joy and gladness, and to be mared in their peace and tranquillity, that sometimes the sight of another's use of what is in itself lawful, will be enough to do it: *If thy brother be grieved with thy meat.* The strong cared little to put the weak to this grief of mind by their very meats, seeing it was something for their advantage, and conform to their christian liberty, and the weak were too soon shaken by this practice which was in itself lawful.

III. It is a most unchristian, uncharitable thing for Christians, to be so little affected towards the spiritual emolument and comfortable walking of their brethren, and so little moved with what discourageth their spirits, lesseneth their joy, and mareth their chearful walk in the way of godliness, as not to forbear the use of indifferent things, when the peace, calmness, joy and gladness of their brethren stands upon it; *but if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably.*

IV. Howbeit many think little of stumbling others, and scandalizing them, or of their use of indifferent things, whereby others are so scandalized; yet, in God's account, the doing of that whereby our brother is but grieved in his own mind, for thinking us not so tender in our walk as he could wish, or some such way, is soul-murder; as being a doing, so far as lieth in our power, what may sadden his heart, so as to make him go back in the way of godliness, tho' it should never actually fall out so; the grieving of our brother with our meat, is a destroying of him, *Destroy not him with thy meat.* See 1 Cor. viii. 11.

V. Tho' it be impossible that ever any such as Christ laid down his life for, and by the price of blood redeemed from hell and death, should actually perish; yet we may be guilty of soul-murder before God,

by doing that which is inductive unto sin, and so that which may lead, provoke and stir him up to sin, which, if mercy prevent not, will certainly procure ruin and death to him: *Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.* See 1 Cor. viii. 11.

VI. This sin of scandalizing the weak, draweth deeper than many are aware; it is no less than a counterworking of Christ, a labouring to rob him of his purchase, even of his dear purchase of blood; and to spoil him of those for whom he has laid down his life; it is a *destroying of him for whom Christ died*, even tho' he who is scandalized be none of those for whom Christ hath laid down his life; for he may be so for any thing we know, and we should account so in charity of all professors. See 2 Cor. viii. 12.

VII. Were we studying the rules of charity more; and considering the nature of this deed of scandalizing our brother, and particularly how it were soul-murder, even a murdering of souls purchased by Christ at the dearest rate, the rate of his blood, we durst not adventure to be so addicted to our own pleasures, wills, advantage or ease, under pretext of authority, or shelter of that kind, as to adhere to the practice of things not absolutely necessary, but at best only indifferent, when the edification of our neighbour is endangered thereby; for these are the arguments the apostle useth here; *Now walkest thou not charitably; destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.* See 1 Cor. viii. 11.

VERSE 16. *Let not then your good be evil spoken of.*

A Sixth argument is, By your walking the length of your christian liberty in the use of these indifferent things, when your weak brethren are offended therewith, you give occasion to them to think and speak evil of your christian profession and liberty, and to account it no liberty grant-

ed of Christ, but a licentiousness authorized by Satan, and so to blaspheme the same, which should be guarded against by all means possible, and so far as as lieth in your power.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Our carriage becometh scandalous and offensive unto our neighbour, when he is thereby induced to have sinister thoughts of Christianity, and of our profession, and to vent his ill thoughts thereof, to the dishonour of God; that is, *when our good is evil spoken of.*

II. Such is our corruption, that when any who are of a contrary judgment unto us, walk otherways than we think doth become Christians, we will not impute that unto their persons, and account it a personal escape, but are ready to impute it unto their principles, and cry out against their profession, and blaspheme even that whereof God is author; so did the weak here blaspheme that which was good, and that upon this score: *Let not your good be evil spoken of, or blasphemed.*

III. Tho' Christians ought not to be seeking a name in a world, and proposing that as a main thing; yet so tender ought they to be of their name and profession, wherein God's glory is so much concerned, that by all means they should labour to walk so circumspectly as none may have any occasion given of thinking or speaking reproachfully and disgracefully of Christianity; and in particular, should not lay the profit or advantage they can have by the practising of things indifferent, in the ballance with that: For this is the sum of the apostle's argument, *Let not your good be evil spoken of.*

IV. The profession of Christianity, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased unto his followers, however enemies and strangers thereto account little of it, yea, do despise and speak evil thereof; yet it ought to be precious in the account and estimation of, and most acceptable unto

believers, so as it should go near their heart to hear the same reproached, and should therefore by all means prevent the same: therefore their profession and christian liberty is called here, *their good*; *Let not your good be evil spoken of.*

VERSES 17. 18. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

There is a seventh argument here laid down, to this purpose: You take it ill to have your liberty abridged in these indifferent things, and are so stiff and violent for the practice of them as if they were of more concern to your everlasting interest; but this is your mistake, these indifferent things are not so absolutely necessary unto salvation as you imagine; and since they are not of such necessity, why lay you so much weight upon them? why are you so loth to forbear the use of them, even when your brother is offended thereat? For illustration of this argument, he tells them, 1st, That *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink*; that is, that the practice of these indifferent things is not the hinge upon which our everlasting well-being turneth; they are not of absolute necessity for a state of grace, to bring us or keep us in favour with God, 1 Cor. viii. 8. nor yet for a state of glory, as if there were no enjoyment of the favour of God during eternity, without the practice of indifferent things. 2^{dly}, He sheweth what things are far more necessary, and far more to be looked to, and nameth three particulars, 1. *Righteousness*; that is, to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ for justification, Rom. iv. 13. and ix. 30. and to have the grace of God's Spirit sanctifying us, whereby we may be enabled to walk in all our duties, of holiness towards God, Rom. vi. 18. and towards our neigh-

neighbour, 1 Cor. xv. 3. 4. and in particular kepted from wronging his soul by our walk. 2. *Peace*; that is, reconciliation with God thro' faith, Rom. v. 1. peace in our own consciences, Phil. iv. 7. Col. iii. 15. and following of peace with others, 2 Tim. ii. 22. Heb. xii. 14. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Mark ix. 50. 3. *And joy in the Holy Ghost*, a fruit of the other two; and it is that heart-gladsness and rejoicing which believers may win to thro' the apprehension of friendship made up with God thro' faith, 1 Pet. i. 8. and this is wrought thro' the Holy Ghost, as being one of his fruits, Gal. v. 22. and so includeth an endeavouring, on our part, to help forward the joy, and to do nothing that may sadden the spirits, and mar the rejoicing of any believer; these things, would he say, are far more necessary, and should be far more studied. And therefore, 3dly, he both confirmeth the necessity, and exhorteth to the practice of these, saying, verse 18: *For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men*; that is, he who in the exercise of these duties is serving Christ and promoting his honour, is *accepted of God*; and not the man who is laying too much weight upon the practice of indifferent things: The Lord looks upon that as acceptable service, and it is approveable of men who have any understanding in these matters; and therefore the exercise of these things which will be a service to Christ, rewarded of God, and highly thought of by honest men, must be more necessary for salvation than the eating of meats, under the pretext of christian liberty, and therefore should be more studied and laid to heart.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As upon the one hand people are too ready to make the way to heaven broader than it is, in taking liberty to themselves where God hath granted none; so upon the other hand, they are ready to lay too much stress upon these things, wherein

God hath granted liberty, and account such and such actions which in themselves are but indifferent, of great necessity towards life and salvation; for so did the strong here look upon their eating and drinking as necessarily tending to life, and as if the kingdom of heaven consisted therein; and therefore the apostle was forced to tell them, that *the kingdom of God was not meat and drink*.

II. It is ordinary to see such, using fair and specious pretexts, who go on in the practice of such things as are not absolutely necessary unto salvation, to the offence and scandal of the weak followers of Christ; and all their fair pretexts and excuses will not exoner and free them at the hand of God: the strong here pretended that their keeping up of their christian liberty, was a thing they were called to, as they would not hazard their everlasting life and portion in the kingdom of God; they pretended that *the kingdom of God was in meat and drink*.

III. Tho' there be no action which we do as rational men, but falleth under the law of God, either prohibiting or commanding the same, if it be considered as clothed with all its circumstances; yet there are some actions in their own nature indifferent, so as they may, or may not be done, according to the change of circumstances; and which if abstractly considered have no necessary connection with life or death, so as the doing of them will render us the more acceptable to God, or the forbearing of them, the more unacceptable: *The kingdom of heaven is not in meat and drink*: Their eating of such meats, in itself, was a thing indifferent, neither commending nor discommending them unto God. See 1 Cor. viii. 8.

IV. It is a heinous offence before God to practise that which is in itself indifferent, to the scandal and offence of our brethren, notwithstanding of a persuasion, which we may have of some necessity lying upon us to practise the same: It was soul-murder before God in the strong here, to eat such meats,

meats, to the stumbling of the weak, notwithstanding the strong looked upon it as a matter wherein the kingdom of heaven did consist.

V. In a time when offences abound, and many are ready to stumble at what another doth; it were every ones duty to be well acquainting themselves with the nature of these actions they are about to do, and to know whether they be absolutely necessary to be done or forborn, least they endanger their own souls by provoking God, or such as may be done or left undone without any detriment to our souls: therefore doth the apostle think it necessary here to instruct them touching the nature of these actions, about which the question was: *The kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink.*

VI. A soul must be cloathed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and thro' the grace of the Spirit of God must be endeavouring after conformity with the law of God, in all the duties therein required, both towards God and man, that looks to have any portion in the kingdom of God; for the kingdom of God consists in righteousness: *But in righteousness.*

VII. We must be looking upon it as a necessary duty for us, always to be labouring to keep up peace with God, and endeavouring what in us lieth to keep peace with our neighbours also; and when ever a soul thro' faith has gotten on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, then followeth peace and reconciliation with God; *But in righteousness, and peace.* After righteousness followeth peace.

VIII. As the Lord is pleased sometimes to manifest his goodness unto his own people, and shew them that he is reconciled unto them thro' Jesus Christ, and so speak peace to their consciences; so doth he now and then stir up the spirits of his people to rejoice upon the sight of their happy and sure estate in him, and excite their passion of spiritual and heavenly joy; and it is the duty of believers to put a great price on this, and to beware to do any

thing that may sadden the hearts, and quench the joy and rejoicing of other believers, seeing this joy and rejoicing is the arles of heaven, 1 Pet. i. 8. *And joy in the Holy Ghost.*

IX. Tho' carnal things may raise up a carnal spirit to carnal joy, in the midst whereof there may be sadness; yet this spiritual, heavenly joy, ravishing the soul, and making it to exult in the hope of the glory of God, is a fruit of the spirit of God, and is wrought in the soul of one who is cloathed with the righteousness of Christ, and has seen its interest in him, having peace and calmness in their consciences; it is the *joy of the Holy Ghost*, and it is after righteousness and peace.

X. In a time when offences do abound, it were good for believers to be much exercised with thoughts about matters of main concernment, and taken up with duties more immediately touching a life of grace here, and of glory hereafter, and of uncontroverted usefulness; for the apostle thinks it fit at this time, to yoke them to other works than such as tended to debate, even to that wherein the kingdom of heaven doth consist, as righteousness, peace and joy, saying, *He that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, &c.*

XI. The putting on of the righteousness of Christ thro' faith, walking in righteousness towards God and man, keeping peace with God, following after it with men, rejoicing in the Lord, and promoting the spiritual joy of others, is special service to Christ, tending much to his honour and glory: *In these things there is a serving of Christ: He that in these things serveth Christ.*

XII. To be about the fore-mentioned duties, whereby Christ is glorified, as Lord and Christ, is the way for us to be accepted of God, owned and approven of him, and to reap the rich reward of grace in the end; *He that in these things serveth Christ, is accepted of God.*

XIII. Howbeit some may be applauded and

and cried up for standing upon punctilios, and practising every thing, which the utmost limits of their liberty will allow, tho' to the sensible hazard and detriment of other weak Christians, and be more hot about these indifferent matters, than about matters of more everlasting concernment and necessity; yet none but such as do willingly postpone such trivial matters, unto the things of the kingdom of heaven, and are more exercised about these than about mere indifferences, in a time when offences abound, are only worthy of commendation and applause of men (as he is the only man who shall have God's approbation) and will have the praise of such as are endued with spiritual understanding: *He that in these things serveth Christ, is approved of men.*

VERSE 19. *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

UPON the grounds mentioned, ver. 17. 18. he presseth the duties mentioned, ver. 17. in so far as they concerned their neighbours, in two words, viz. peace, and things tending to edification, which takes in both righteousness, and promoting of their joy in the Holy Ghost: let us therefore follow after, pursue hotly, and with earnestness, *the things which make for peace*; all these things which will serve as useful to procure and keep up peace with your neighbour Christians, and banish jars, contests and fruitless disputes about indifferent things: *And things wherewith one may edify another*; that is, such ways and courses as will promote and advance our fellow-christian in his journey towards heaven, and build him up in his most holy faith. And withal, he points at two other arguments to dissuade them from the exercise of indifferent things, in this case of scandal, as, 1. Your meddling with these indifferent things now, in case of scandal, is a way only to keep up divisions, dissensions,

emulations, jars and debates, and to banish peace, unanimity, hearty concord and agreement, that should be among believers; now peace should be lovely and delightful unto you. 2. Not only is your practice in this case, barring of the door on peace, but also it is an enemy to edification and helping forward your neighbour, whom you are bound to edify all you can:

OBSERVATIONS.

I. In a time when offences do much abound, thro' the practice of indifferent things, there useth to be much unrest, disquietness, divisions, debates, quarrels and endless, intricate, doubtful disputes, and every thing tending to foster jealousies, controversies, strife and contention; the apostle's proposing the earnest seeking of things making for peace, as an antidote, supposeth this: *Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace.*

II. When either there is much offence and scandal given or taken, then the work of God in souls is much mared and retarded, little edification, or advancement in the way of holiness; it useth to be a back-going time; this is also supposed while he says, *Follow after the things wherewith one may edify another.*

III. How little soever many account the scandalizing and offending of their fellow Christians, by doing of that which at best is but indifferent and lawful; yet it is proven by sad experience to be the very sowing of the seeds of discord, heart-burning and lasting contention; for so was it here, and therefore he presseth them to seek for peace.

IV. Tho' many think it a harmless thing to use the freedom that their liberty will permit; and some may think it a commendable thing to stumble and take offence at the untender carriage of another; yet both these are much to the prejudice of the work of grace in a soul, and tend much to pull down the work of God in them; and therefore he presseth them to mind edification.

V. As at all times it becometh the people of God to be shewing themselves sons of peace, blessed peace-makers and promoters of peace, amity, friendship and hearty concord, one with another; so especially in a time when offences do abound; and the serious proposing of peace and concord as our end, and using all means to reach the same, will much prevent that dangerous evil of scandalizing and stumbling one another; therefore he says, *Let us follow after the things that make for peace.*

VI. Christians ought to be most serious in minding peace, and earnest in the prosecution of what makes for peace; and notwithstanding of the many difficulties lying in the way, rendering it improbable, if not impossible, ever to win to it; yet to be pursuing it, by all means possible, even when it flyeth from us, with eagerness, zeal, constancy and firm resolution: *We must follow after the things that make for peace*; pursue it, as persecutors do their designs. See Heb. xii. 14.

VII. In hunting after peace, our great desire and earnestness to have it, should not make us take any sinful way to obtain it: for however peace be desirable, yet peace upon sinful terms is cursed and abominable; therefore with a purpose to have peace, he would have them joining a purpose to edify their brethren; and therefore these two are put together: *Follow after the things that make for peace, and the things that edify one another*; so is peace and holiness joined, Heb. xii. 14.

VIII. Tho' believers be, by faith perfectly justified, and put in a justified state, yet the work of conformity unto the image of God, the work of holiness and sanctification in them, comes on by degrees, and comes not to perfection on this side of time, but they are still advancing, and the building of grace is coming up; this is cleared by the metaphor here used, taken from a building; here believers are called a house or temple, 1 Cor. iii. 9. that must grow

by getting one stone laid upon another: *Things that make for edifying.*

IX. As it is a duty lying upon Christians (tho' principally upon ministers, Eph. iv. 11. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 9.) to be promoting the work of grace, in the souls of their neighbours at all times, according to their places and power; so especially should they be seriously endeavouring this in a day when that work is meeting with demurs, thro' the abounding of offences; for at this time he puts them all to it, to be *following after those things that edify one another*; and in this they should not be superficial, but serious and earnest.

X. The consideration of the bitter and sad fruits of stumbling our neighbour by the practising of indifferent things, (as the lasting war, broils and strife, utterly unbecoming Christians, and the marring and retarding of the work of God in souls, and so a crossing and contradicting of God in his building up of souls for himself,) should constrain all Christians to forbear the practice of such things, at such a time: *Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another.*

VERSE 20. *For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

IN the first part of this verse, the apostle prosecutes his former purpose, with other two arguments. The tenth argument then is this, Thy eating in this case of scandal, is a destroying of the work of God, therefore forbear it: The work of grace and sanctification, of holiness and comfort in thy brother, is the work of God, and thou, by stumbling him with thy eating, doth what in thee lyeth to hinder the progress of that work, and so doth that which tendeth to the hurt and utter destruction of that work. The eleventh argument is this, Thou

Thou destroyest the work of God, for a very small inconsiderable matter: *For meat destroy not thou the work of God*; thy meat, tho' useful, is little in comparison of this work of God, and for so small a matter as that, wilt thou endanger the everlasting good of thy brother. In the latter part of the verse, there is an objection loosed. The objection which those, to whom the apostle was now speaking, were ready to start, was this: All meats are now pure and clean; since Christ is come, all ceremonial uncleanness is now out of the way; and why may we not then make use of meats which are now cleansed to us, and which the Lord alloweth us the use of? He answereth, granting that *indeed all things are pure*, but he denieth the consequence, saying, *But it is evil for that man who eateth with offence*; that is, notwithstanding that those meats be now morally pure, and free of any ceremonial uncleanness, yet it is sinful and unlawful to eat those meats, to the offence and scandalizing of thy brother.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The work of grace, and comfort in a soul, is a work which God owneth as his, he being the first author of faith, and all other graces in a soul, Heb. xii. 2. Psal. ii. 13. and of the comfort and joy of believers, 2 Cor. i. 3. 4. the daily nourisher and carrier on of the work, by his daily influences, upon their souls, and the finisher and crowner thereof, in his own time; hence it is called, *The work of God*.

II. Howbeit this work of grace and consolation in souls, be in such a hand, as shall certainly carry it on to a perfect closure, and shall not suffer it to miscarry; yet it is liable to many stops, demurs, and obstructions, and to such casual occurrences, as interpretatively are means to destroy the same: *Destroy not thou the work of God*.

III. As this work meets with many retarding obstructions, from corruption within a man's self; so doth it meet with im-

pediments from others about us, and that not only by their doing of what may foster, or excite corruption in us; or doing that which is sinful in itself, before us; or in a carnal, sinful manner, what is lawful and necessary; but also, by their very ordinary carriage in matters of small moment, and indifference: So tender a thing is grace in a soul, that a small contrary blast will mar the growth thereof, even the unseasonable eating and drinking of others: *For thy meat, destroy not the work of God*.

IV. The consideration of the dependance that the work of grace, and of comfort, hath upon God, as the author and principal carrier on of the same, should strongly move all his people to carry themselves so tenderly and circumspectly in their daily carriage, as that they obstruct not nor mar the spiritual good and edification of their brethren, and the progress of the work of grace and consolation in their souls; for he useth this argument, that in so doing they were destroying (or doing that which tended that way) *the work of God*.

V. The smaller and more inconsiderable the matter be, in doing whereof we endanger and endamage the happiness and welfare of the soul of our brother, the greater is our guilt, if we shall thereby do that which tendeth to the hurt of his soul; and such hearty love should we have unto the benefit and advantage of our brother, that we should be loth to lay the good we can reap, by the use of such or such meats, or any other indifferent thing, once in the balance with the inevitable hurt which shall redound thereby unto his soul: *For meat destroy not the work of God*.

VI. Tho' we will readily be convinced of our guilt in wronging the souls of our neighbours, when we do that which is sinful upon the matter, whereby they are scandalized; yet we are ready to shift any conviction of wronging the work of God in our brother's soul, if that which we do be lawful upon the matter, thinking that God's allowing us that liberty, and not re-

straining us by his law, is warrant enough for us to go the full length, stumble or not stumble who will; for we see the apostle preventing this objection, which he saw they would readily start, and under which they thought to hide themselves from the challenge: *All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

VII. Not only is there real matter of scandal and offence given, when we do that, which upon the matter is sinful and prohibited, or yet hath the appearance of evil, 1 Thess. v. 17. Plsil. iv. 8. 9. Gal. ii. 3. &c. but also when the matter is lawful, and indifferent, and not necessary; tho' all meats are pure, yet one may eat with offence: *All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

VIII. Our very use of indifferent things becometh sinful unto us, when thereby our brother is offended, and the work of God in his soul is mared, tho' otherwise we may lawfully use them or not, according to our own pleasure: *All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

VERSE 21. *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*

THE twelfth argument is here, whereby also he further cleareth what he had said last, in answering of the objection. The argument lieth thus, Since it is a thing useful and profitable, both for yourselves and others, to abstain from the use of flesh and wine, which are not absolutely necessary for the life of man, or any other thing indifferent, in case of scandal; then should you abstain from the use of these meats, at which the weak do stumble. This is clear enough in itself. But so it is, that it is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy

brother stumbleth; and this hath been cleared before, and will afterwards be more cleared, both as to the strong, and as to weak; therefore, &c. Now he cleareth further, what it is to eat with offence, by adding some words bothonymous; upon the matter, saying, *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth*; that is, is made to trip and fall at the stumbling-block, laid in his way, and so is drawn to sin; Rom. x. 32. *or is offended*, and made to go off the way he was walking in, and so is retarded in his journey, *or is made weak*; that is, weighted and made sad, and not so able to walk in his christian course, with such assurance as formerly, but filled with doubts and scruples, that makes him halt in the way, or step leisurely.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Howbeit many think it a thing little up or down, whether they do or leave undone, things which are in their own nature indifferent, be the circumstances what they will; yet, in case of scandal, as it is most hazardous and pernicious to act, so is it most useful and profitable, upon all hands (whatever the loss may be otherways) to forbear acting: *It is good neither to eat flesh nor drink wine*, (tho' this might have its own advantage sometimes) nor any thing whereby thy brother is offended, &c. See 1 Cor. viii. 13.

II. It is sinful and offensive for us, to do these things (tho' indifferent) whereby, not only, our brother is drawn to sin against God, but also, when thereby he is made to halt in the way, and made sad, and to go heavily, wanting that alacrity and cheerful christian confidence, which formerly he had; our eating is offensive, not only when our brother is offended and stumbleth, but also when he is made weak: *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*

III. Tho' the unseasonable use and practice

rice of indifferent things, may not have that influence upon some, as to stir up and awaken their corruptions, and so draw them aside actually to commit sin, and cause them actually to stumble and fall; yet it may have influence upon their judgments, and raise doubts and scruples; and upon their consciences, and so awaken challenges, so that thereby they shall be weakened and more unable to advance resolutely, and with christian courage and assurance; tho' they should not stumble or be offended, yet they may be made weak: *or is made weak.*

VERSE 22. *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*

IN the first part of this verse, the apostle meeteth with another objection; and in the latter part proposeth a thirteenth argument. The objection is this, might the strong say, How doth this you press me to, agree with my christian liberty? I believe that now the restraint that was put upon the Jews by the ceremonial law, is now removed; and if I practise not according to this liberty which Christ hath purchased, how shall I possess the faith of this liberty. He answereth, *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God*; keep still thy faith of thy christian liberty, and walk in thy christian liberty so as thou give not offence. It is enough in this case that God knoweth thy heart, and that tho' thou wilt not eat of such meats as may give offence, yet thou believest thou mayst lawfully eat of them in another case, and so keepest the faith of thy liberty: Then he addeth a new argument, *Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth*; whereby also he cleareth the answer he made unto the objection, *Happy is he* who doth not act every thing which he alloweth as lawful, when his conscience may, in the mean time, chal-

lenge him and condemn him for unseasonable doing thereof; and so, in this case, it is enough to keep the faith of his christian liberty to himself before God: Again, *Happy is he* that so practiseth these things which he alloweth of, as consonant to his christian liberty, as not thereby stumbling his brother, and so bringing guilt, and hazard of condemnation, upon himself; and so, since the practising of things indifferent and allowable, in this case of scandal, is hazardous unto your own salvation, it is best to be forborn; and so he further confirmeth what he said, verse 21.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is no easy matter to get folks who are once engaged in a debate, brought to a willingness to cede and pass from some things which they have been accustomed to practise, for the good and advantage of their opposites, tho' brethren in grace; for we see the strong here, were ready to move and start one objection upon the back of another, against Paul's pressing them to abstinence in case of scandal: Here is another objection, *Hast thou faith?*

II. Many are ready to justify and approve of their practising of things indifferent, to the scandal and offence of their brethren, if they can say that they are persuaded of the lawfulness thereof, and that it was consonant to their christian liberty; this was their objection here, they knew it was a piece of their christian liberty, and they were persuaded of it; they had faith: *Hast thou faith?*

III. Tho' the practisers of indifferent things should look upon themselves as some way necessitated and constrained to practise such things as are lawful and indifferent, tho' not always, (least they should be looked on as accounting them absolutely necessary;) yet sometimes at least, that their practice might be conform to their principles and persuasions, who were persuaded that these things were indifferent, and not things in themselves sinful, yet notwithstanding

standing of this persuasion, so long as the case of scandal lasteth, these indifferent things ought never to be practised: *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.*

IV. Persuasion of the lawfulness of what we do in matters indifferent, will not justify our practice in the case of scandal; and not practising of things indifferent in this case, may well consist with a full persuasion of the lawfulness of such practice, when the scandal ceaseth, during which case of scandal we are not bound to declare our persuasion by such practice; but it is sufficient if we keep that persuasion within, and make our own use thereof, tho' we trouble not others therewith: *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself.*

V. Not only should we labour to approve our external actions before the Lord, but also should look how our inward heart persuasions are before him; for he would have the strong keep still their persuasion before God: *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.*

VI. That which we do, may be lawful, and yet so gone about as may awaken challenges in our conscience, and make our own consciences pass a sentence against us, especially when we see that our doing thereof giveth offence unto our brethren: *Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*

VII. It is a happy and desirable thing, so to carry ourselves in all our actions, both as to matter and manner, that not only the matter be lawful, about which we are exercised, but also that the way of our going about that work be christian, and edifying, and no way stumbling unto our brethren, so as we keep and carry along with us the testimony of a good conscience: *Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth.*

VIII. The consideration of the evil which we may procure to ourselves by doing of what is indifferent, when thereby our brother is offended, or made weak, in awakening our consciences, and occasioning

their passing a sentence against us, for doing that which stumbleth our brother, and when we thereby hazard our own welfare and salvation, should press forbearance; for this is his argument, *Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth*; and so to do that which we allow, and yet so as thereby to hazard our own condemnation, is to mar our own happiness, and therefore should be forborne.

VERSE 23. *And he that doubteth, is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.*

THE last argument is taken from the inevitable hazard which the poor, weak brother is in thereby: Would he say, Thou by thy eating casts a copy unto, and so constraineth thy brother to eat also; now he has not clearness to eat, but he doubteth, and if he eat in that case, he hazards his salvation, and sins grievously against God: *He that doubteth, is damned if he eat*; and the reason is, *because he eateth not of faith*; he is not persuaded of the lawfulness of what he doth, and so has not faith grounded upon the word. And this reason is confirmed by a general assertion, *For whatsoever is not of faith, is sin*; whatsoever we do without a warrant, and without a warrant known to us, and upon the score of that warrant, is sin to us.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Folks may be doing that which is lawful in itself, and yet in the doing thereof hazard their own salvation, in not heeding the right manner of going about the same; they may eat, (which is a thing indifferent, and so lawful in itself,) and yet be damned: *He that doubteth, is damned if he eat.*

II. It is a most dangerous thing to despise and trample under foot the authority of conscience, which is God's deputy within us, and go over its belly to do any thing, tho' in itself not sinful, and tho'

our conscience be not positively and directly against it, but only wavering, doubting, and not thoroughly clear; for it is an adventuring upon that which we dare not confidently deny to be sin, and so most hazardous; even *he who doubteth, is damned if he eat.*

III. Our practice of things indifferent becometh sinful and unlawful unto us, and matter of stumbling unto our brother, when thereby our weak brother, who is not so clear anent the indifferency of the thing as we are, is induced by our example to do that which he is not fully persuaded to be lawful, but at least doubteth thereof: this is the ground of the reason, that by the eating of the stronger, he who doubted was constrained or induced to eat by the other's example: *He who doubteth, is damned if he eat.*

IV. Tho' there were no more to press us to forbear the practice of indifferent things, in the case of scandal, the consideration of this should move us, *viz.* the inevitable hazard we bring the soul of our brother into thereby, in moving him, by our example, to do as we do, tho' in conscience he be not so clear of the indifferency thereof as we are; for this is the apostle's argument, *He who doubteth, is damned if he eat.*

V. The want of a distinct and clear apprehension of the lawfulness of what we do, at least of so much as will banish away doubting, casts us in great danger, even tho' the thing we do be lawful in itself: *He that doubteth, is damned if he eat; and that because he eateth not of faith.*

VI. That light which can only dispel the clouds of doubting and hesitation, a-

nent the lawfulness or unlawfulness of what we do, is not brought from the command and authority of superiors, or from the practice of others whom we conceive to be better skilled and versed in these matters than we are, but allenarly cometh from the word of truth, to which faith must go for counsel: *Because he eateth not of faith;* that is, because he has not clearness from the word, for that is only the ground that faith walks on, and from which it receiveth light.

VII. To make an action acceptable before God, beside the lawfulness thereof upon the matter, as it is requisite that the man be in the faith, reconciled to God thro' Christ, fetching influence thro' faith from Christ the store-house of strength, Heb. xi. 6; so it is requisite that the man have the nature of the action cleared to him out of the word, so that he be distinct therein, and persuaded thereof, and that he act upon that ground, otherways this action, how lawful soever upon the matter, is sin to him: *For whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.*

VIII. Tho' all sins be not alike heinous in the sight of God, but some more, some less; yet all and every sin, even the least, deserveth no less than the everlasting curse and wrath of God, and sentence of condemnation; for the reason why those who eated doubtingly were damned already, was, because it was sin: *Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* And so the very eating of indifferent meats, though lawful in itself, deserveth damnation, when done with a doubting conscience, and that because it is sin; and so every sin, even the least, deserveth that.



CHAPTER XV.

THIS chapter hath two parts; in the first part, which continueth to verse 14. the apostle is following forth the purpose he was upon in the last chapter; in the next part there is the conclusion of the whole epistle. In the first part he doth these two things; 1. He presseth a duty upon the strong Christians in reference to the weak, who were ready to stumble and take offence at their carriage in the use of these indifferent things, to verse 5. And, 2. from thence, he presseth a duty upon both weak and strong in reference to one another; closing with a word of prayer, verse 13.

VERSES 1. 2. *We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves, Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.*

HAVING in the latter part of the former chapter, pressed the stronger Christians to forbear the scandalizing and stumbling of the weak, and shown the sad inconveniencies that would follow upon their practising of indifferent things in the case of scandal, in the end of that chapter; he now infereth, as it were, a conclusion, holding forth the duties which he would have them making conscience of at such a time when offences did abound; *We now therefore that are strong, &c.* The duty is pressed in these three words; 1. *To bear the infirmities of the weak*; that is, to take a heartsome list of them for the ease of the weak; to sympathize with and pity them who are weak of understanding, and to bear with them in those things that flow from weakness of understanding. 2. *And not to please ourselves*; not to propose ourselves and our own profit and advantage as our only end in all that we do, and to have respect to nothing but what maketh for our own advantage;

and this will be a notable mean to help us to condescend so far as to bear the infirmities of the weak. 3. *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification*; We ought so to carry ourselves, as to propose the good and advantage of others as our end; we should labour what we can to please others, and yet so to please them, as not to further them in any sinful course, but to their good, and their best good, their edification. Now, the main thing which he is driving at here, is, that the strong would condescend unto the weak, and bear with them; and to press this he useth several arguments; and in these two verses there are four couched up: (1.) *We ought*; that is, we are bound thereunto both by the law of nature, and by the express command of God. (2.) *We that are strong ought, &c.* I lay no other duty upon you than I take to myself; I put myself under the same yoke with you; I look upon myself as bound to this duty no less than you. (3.) *And not to please ourselves*; If we mind not this duty we shall be guilty of this sin of pleasing ourselves, and doing all for ourselves, as if we had gotten all that we have for ourselves alone. (4.) *Let every one of us please his neighbour, &c.* All of us are bound before God to mind the everlasting

everlaſting good of our neighbour, and to ſeek his edification by any means, and therefore we ſhould look upon ourſelves as obliged to bear the infirmities of the weak.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As there will ſtill be ſome weak lambs, who are not ſo ſtrong in knowledge as others in the church of God; ſo there will ſtill be infirmities, eſcapes, and weakneſſes kything by reaſon thereof: *Infirmities of the weak*; the weak uſually have eſcapes, and ſuch things as ſmell of weakneſs.

II. Tho' theſe infirmities and eſcapes of weakneſs, which weak Chriſtians are ſubject unto, be weighty and burdensome unto the ſtrong; yet it becometh the ſtrong to be ſympathizing with the weak, to be warm and kindly towards them, lending them ſome liſts friendly and lovingly, binding them up and ſtrengthening them, inſtructing them, and helping their underſtanding, and tenderly binding up their wounds, ſeeing they are members of the ſame body, and owned of Chriſt the head: *We that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* See Gal. vi. 2.

III. In a time when offences do abound, thro' the practice of indifferent things, it is not the duty of the ſtrong, who are clear to act, to undervalue ſuch as are not clear, and think to make them come up to them in practice; but, upon the contrary, they ought to condeſcend unto the weak, to be tender towards them as brittle things, and to bear with their infirmities: *We then that are ſtrong, ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak.* See 1 Cor. ix. 19. 20.

IV. As it is encouraging to people to ſee miniſters taking a liſt of the ſame yoke which they lay upon their ſhoulders; ſo it ſhould lay an obligation on people to ſet about theſe duties more chearfully and cordially; therefore he puts in his own ſhoulder under the burden, *We then that are ſtrong, &c.*

V. This ſubmitting and condeſcending of the ſtrong unto the weak, is not an act

of mere courteſy, but a neceſſary duty called for at their hands by the law of God, written partly in the dim letters of nature, and partly in the clear volume of the word; and ſo ſhould the ſtrong look upon it as a duty laid upon them by the Lord: *We that are ſtrong, ought, &c.*

VI. When many are taking offence at our walking, and uſing of indifferent things, ſo untender are many of us, that we regard little the good and ſtanding of others, but are ſo conceited of our own aſings, that we think none needs take exception thereat, and therefore we become ſtiff and tenacious of our opinions, in maintaining them by our practices, that we lay aſide altogether thoughts of peace and condeſcenſion; therefore he preſſeth them next, not to pleaſe themſelves; *And not to pleaſe ourſelves.*

VII. It is a notable mean to help Chriſtians who are ſtrong to bear with the weak in a time when offences abound, and to walk chriſtianly at ſuch a time, and to withdraw fuel from the fire of ſtriſe thro' offences, to be laying aſide ſelf-willedneſs, and a ſelf-pleaſing humour, and to be dead to our pleaſure and inclination, and not to be taken up with our own things, and the eager purſuit after thoſe things which ſuit our own humour and inclination; therefore he addeth, *And not to pleaſe ourſelves.*

VIII. Whoever is tenacious of his own opinion, and is bewitched with ſelf-love and a ſelf-pleaſing humour, will walk moſt unchriſtianly when offences abound, this being an humour which is ready to blow the coal of diſiſion, and foment offences, by making him untender towards the weak; and therefore the conſideration of the evil of ſuch a ſelf-pleaſing humour, deſire, and diſpoſition, ſhould make all Chriſtians labour to put on bowels of tenderneſs and ſympathy towards the weak, as a diſpoſition point-blank contrary unto that ſelf-pleaſing humour; and therefore to preſs them to bear with the weak, he willeth them next, not to be ſeeking to pleaſe themſelves.

themselves, to shew that these two are contrary to each other: *And not to please ourselves.*

IX. When offences abound, it is a most suitable disposition for Christians not to be addicted to seek themselves, or what makes for themselves, but to be searching out what may please other weak honest Christians best; for this will be a notable way to remove the ground of offences taken at their carriage in some indifferent things, and will help them to a fellow-feeling, sympathizing disposition: therefore he addeth, *Let every one of us please his neighbour.*

X. In our seeking to please our neighbour Christians anent indifferent things, we should not labour to humour and foster them in their sinful apprehensions, but should propose their edification and spiritual good as our end, and seek to please them best in those things which will tend to promote their spiritual good in Christ: *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.*

VERSE 3. *For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.*

THAT which the apostle pressed formerly, viz. That we should not labour so much to please ourselves, but should seek to please our neighbour, he presseth here from Christ's example; *For even Christ pleased not himself:* And, withall, it holdeth forth a first argument to enforce the main thing, viz. that the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak, because Christ laid aside the care of his own particular, that he might promote the good and salvation of Others, which is further cleared from the text cited, *But as it is written, viz. Psalm lxxix. 9. The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me;* Where David, as a type of Christ, uttereth these words, (see John ii. 17.) being then wrestling with God by prayer, he tells,

that the ill carriage, and particularly the reproaches of his enemies against God, lay near his heart, and was a burden on his spirit, under which he walked christianly, minding still his duty to God; and what David here uttereth, agreeth more fully with Christ the antitype, who bore with the vile and base reproaches that his enemies vomited out against God, and had pity on many, notwithstanding of these, laying down his life a ransom for such sinners and sins; and if so, much more ought we to bear with the infirmities of our weak brethren, seeing, 1. their infirmities are not reproaches; 2. their weakness, tho' a burden to us, yet are not reproaches against God; 3. they are brethren, these were enemies; 4. and weak brethren, these malicious and bitter adversaries. So then, seeing Christ laid aside his glory for a while, and took a list of the malicious reproaches, and sinful carriage of his very enemies, and notwithstanding thereof, sought their good by laying down his life a ransom for them, and so taking away their sins and their reproaches, much more ought we to lay aside our own self-pleasing humour, and condescend to the weak, and take a list of their weakness and infirmities, and labour christianly to remove them.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Such was the love that Christ had unto the glory of God, and the salvation of poor sinners, that to gain that he was content to lay aside his glory, splendor, and majesty, and become of no reputation, Phil. ii. 7. and to be dead to the pleasures, honours, and profits of the world, and to quit with life and all, Phil. ii. 8. *He did not please himself.*

II. It is a shame for believers, who ought to be followres of Christ as their Lord and Captain, and imitators of him as their pattern and copy in all their moral duties, 1 Cor. xi. 1. Eph. v. 1. 2. 25. and iv. 23. Heb. xii. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 21. and iii. 18. Phil.

is: 5. to be looking unlike Christ in this duty of self-denial; but though we cannot win up to conformity to our example, in being dead and crucified to our pleasures and delights in a world, yet it is our duty to be imitating him, and whatever difficulties ly in the way, to be drawing encouragement from his example, denying our own pleasures, profits, and carnal advantages in a world, and postponing all these to the glory of God, and edification of our neighbours: *Even as Christ pleased not himself.*

III. So fully did Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, fulfil and answer all things which was prophesied of him as the Messiah, before he came into the world, that, to prove what he did, we need no more but look what was foretold of him; therefore the apostle proves that Christ pleased not himself, by a passage out of the Old Testament, which foretold what he would do; *As it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.*

IV. It is good and useful for us so to read over and acquaint ourselves with what was Christ's carriage in the world, as to see in it his fulfilling of all the prophecies that were made concerning him, and answering all that was typified of him, and answering all that was either said or done by others as types of him: therefore doth Paul cite this passage of David's, who in it was a type of Christ, and so leads them up to see how fully that which typified of him was verified in him: *As it is written, The reproaches of them, &c.*

V. Tho' the church of God under the Old Testament, had not that clear discovery of the Mediator of the world, and of his actions; yet the same Mediator was held forth to them under types and figures, and his actions and deportment pointed out to them in others who typified him: Thus in David they might have seen and read the meekness, love and self-denial of the Messiah, when he said, *The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.*

VI. Whatever we find spoken of such

in scripture as were types of our Lord Jesus Christ, doth more fully agree to him; and we are allowed to expone them of him, with an amplification; they being but shadows could not fully and thoroughly to the life represent the substance: for what agreed to David as type, in his suffering by the reproaches of others, doth many more ways agree to Christ, and is much more fully verified of him than it could have been of David; for Christ did otherwise suffer by the reproaches of the wicked than David did: *As it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.*

VII. It is no uncommon thing to see the wicked breaking out in vile reproachful language against God, his work, his interest, and his people, and venting the maliciousness and wickedness of their hearts; *The reproaches of them that reproached thee:* This carriage of the wicked is but too ordinary; see Isa. xxxvii. Psalm xliv. 16. and lxxiv. 22.

VIII. Tho' wicked and graceless sinners think little to reproach the people of God, 1 Pet. iv. 14. and speak bitterly against their confidence in God, Isa. xxxvii. 10. &c. and their adhering to him, Psalm lxxix. 7. against his ordinances, verse 9. and himself and attributes, Psalm xliv. 16.; yet in so doing they are opening their mouths against the God of heaven, and their reproaches do directly strike against the Almighty: *The reproaches of them that reproached thee:* They make God their party.

IX. There is no tender gracious soul, but will be much affected and moved with the reproaches that maliciously and desperately wicked wretches are uttering and belching out against the work, ordinances, grace, interest, and people of God; these will ly heavy upon their spirit, and will be matter of mourning unto them: *The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me,* says David. See Psalm lxxix. 20. and lxxxix. 50.

X. As our Lord Jesus Christ was himself the butt of many malicious reproaches that the wicked spewed out, Matth. xii. 24. and xxvii. 39. to 44. and was most deeply affected with the reproachful carriage of others, Luke xi. 41. 42. Matth xxiii. 37.; so he took a most kindly heartsome list of others lying under the guilt of reproaches, and other crying crimes; that he bore them on his back, and, as it were, fled with them unto the wilderness, that they might be remembered no more against them; he lifted them up, and carried them away, by satisfying justice for them to the full; thus *the reproaches of such as reproached God fell on him*: He died even for such sinners.

XI. Christ Jesus his laying down his life cheerfully and willingly, even for such sinners as were guilty of reproaching his God and Father, and himself who was God equal with the Father, speaks out much of his wonderful condescension, and his denying of himself; and doth abundantly shew how he did not please himself; for the apostle proves he did not please himself, because *the reproaches of them that reproached God fell on him*.

XII. Christ's so compassionating his very enemies, and enemies reproaching the God of heaven, as to bear and take a kindly list of their transgressions, and free them from the weight and guilt of them before God, should strongly engage us to bear with the infirmities of our weak brethren, and tenderly to deal with them; for thus he presseth them to bear with the infirmities of the weak, because it is written of Christ, *The reproaches of such as reproached God fell on him*.

VERSE 4. *For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

BEcause it might have been objected against his making use of the fore-

mentioned citation, that it was not pertinent, because it was a passage cited out of the Old Testament, which to us under the New Testament should have no weight; therefore he laboureth to remove this objection, and taketh occasion to shew the usefulness of the Old Testament scriptures for us now who live under the gospel; *For, says he, whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, &c.* The Lord consulted our good and advantage in committing these things which are registered unto writing; and seeing the Lord committed such things to writing for our good, and particularly for our instruction, we may well make use of them for confirming us anent the truth of some useful and necessary point, such as concerneth Christ. Now, he pointeth forth two main comprehensive ends of the Lord's giving us the Old Testament scriptures, (which agreeth unto the New Testament scriptures also, as much, if not more;) and thereby sheweth their great usefulness. The first main end and advantage is, for our faith, information, and learning; the next is, for our christian carriage and deportment. Our life here is not a life of full enjoyment of the full crop, but a life of hope. Now, the scriptures are good for both; both to help us to faith, by pointing forth the mind of God, and so it is good for our learning or instruction; and to help us to hope: And this it doth by helping us, 1. to patience, and 2. to comfort. Our life being a life of hope is accompanied with afflictions, and these occasion much sorrow and grief, whereby our life of hope is mared; now the scriptures lay out to us such grounds and examples, for stirring us up to patience and comfort, that thereby our life of hope is kept in; and all this is had through the doctrine of the scriptures: *That we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As in citing of scripture we ought to cite such as are pertinent, so should we labour

bour to convince our hearers both of the pertinence and of the binding force of that scripture which we make use of, that the deceitful heart may find no way of escaping, but may be forced to submit unto the clear light of truth: for Paul, after his citing of that passage out of the Old Testament, to shew its pertinence and force, addeth, *For whatsoever things were written aforetime, &c.*

II. Howbeit the Lord hath thought fit to augment the canon to us who live under the gospel, and enlarge the rule, for our further clearing; yet we should not lay aside the study of the Old Testament scriptures, seeing they are useful for the same ends that the whole scriptures are given for, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 17. and particularly able to clear and confirm us anent New Testament truths, and anent the Messias; for *whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning.*

III. Tho' there was a time wherein the Lord was pleased to communicate his mind unto his people by dreams, visions, and more immediate intercourse; yet he thought it fit at length, for the greater security of his people against temptations, to commit his mind to writing, and so give them a law among their hands, whereby they may always have occasion to acquaint themselves with the mind of God, writing something of it with his own hand, Exod. xxxii. 16. and xxxiv. 4. Deut. x. 4. calling and acting others for that work, 2 Pet. i. 20. 2 Tim. iii. 16.: *Whatsoever was written aforetime, &c.*

IV. Not only is the written will of God useful and necessary for new beginners in the way of Christianity, but even for the ablest Christian that steps, so as none needs be so mad as to imagine themselves above its teaching; for the apostle reckoneth in himself among such for whose instruction and learning the scriptures are useful, and is speaking to the ablest and strongest Christians in Rome: *Whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning.*

V. As all of us have need to be instructed in the ways of God, being most ignorant by nature, and the best of us knowing but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9.; so all the knowledge of God which we should study for, and endeavour after, should be drawn out of the rich mine of the word; seeing for this end it is that God hath given us such a standing rule, and for this end it should be daily searched into: *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning.*

VI. This canon is perfect and complete in all its parts, containing all things necessary for us unto salvation, and every truth that is necessary for us to know that we may reach life eternal, and so able to make the man of God perfect, 2 Tim. iii. 17.; it was *written for our learning*, and so able to make us perfect in learning and understanding, John xx. 31. and v. 39. Isa. viii. 20. Psalm xix. 8. 9. and so nothing ought to be added to it, nor taken away from it, Rev. xxii. 18. 19. Deut. iv. 2.

VII. By this standing rule ought we to try all the doctrines of men, and reject whatever is not consonant thereunto; for it was written to the end that we should learn and be instructed in the truths of God, and so it is only able to acquaint us savingly with the mind of God; and whatsoever is contrary thereunto cannot be the mind of God, and so should be laid aside by us: *It is written for our learning.*

VIII. As the written word of God is able to acquaint us with all things necessary to be believed, and so to inform our judgments perfectly in the matters of faith; so is it able to instruct us in all things necessary for a christian life, and to teach us completely how we shall walk in our christian converse, so as hope might be kept up, and we might not lose a sight of heaven: *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written --- that we might have hope.*

IX. All our study of, and insight in the scriptures of God, should tend to practice,

and to the bettering of us in our christian walk towards heaven; and whatever knowledge we attain to, if it has not some effect upon our ways, it is for nought; for 'tho' one end of God's giving his mind to us in writ be our learning, yet that is but a subordinate end; there is another more remote, to which the other tendeth, and that is our hope; therefore it is said, *That we -- might have hope.*

X. As the life of believers in this side of time, is a life filled with troubles and afflictions of all kinds, so as they are called to keep the grace of patience constantly in exercise; so hath God provided a mean whereby the hearts of his own may be kept up from fainting, and has laid down so many notable grounds in the scriptures for bearing up the head of his exercised people; so that it is the ignorance, and not studying and right use-making of his word, where the outgate from, and the advantages which are to be had by the cross, are fully laid out, which maketh his people droop so sore under the load: There is here mention made of the patience of the scriptures; *through patience---*
of the scriptures.

XI. As sorrow and sighing doth ordinarily attend an afflicted condition, and the Lord knoweth that his people are oftentimes discouraged, and ready to sit down in sorrow, needing much consolation; so hath he, in his wonderful goodness, provided a bundle of cordials, and hath put them all in a box, and put the box in their hands, that they may suck out consolation from thence; and the not improving of this store-house of comfort maketh the discouragements of his people grow daily: *Through patience and comfort of the scriptures.*

XII. Notwithstanding of all the enjoyments which God's people now and then win to here away, yet it is but as arles, and the first-fruits unto the full crop that is coming; for all they get here, they must have still in hope, and all their life is but

a life of hope; their best days are but coming: *Might have hope.* See 1 Pet. i. 3. Heb. vi. 19.

XIII. The Lord saw that there would many clouds arise and darken our eyes, and hinder our sight of life and of the crown, and so mar our hope, and fill us with questions, doubts, and perplexities about our interest in life, and right to glory; and therefore, out of his special goodness, hath he provided a written word, unfolding the promises and faithfulness of God, as a sure and settled ground for hope to stay on: *That we through comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

XIV. Where patience is exercised upon scripture grounds, in all afflictions spiritual and temporal, and the soul comforted with a sight of the promises, and other grounds of consolation held forth in the word, there the life of hope will be kept in, and a soul will be helped to walk christianly in hope; and the hope that is not flowing from scripture this way, and founded on faith in the word, is but a delusion and a dream: *Whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

VERSES 5. 6. *Now the God of patience and consolation, grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus:*

That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE apostle being, in the next place, to press all the believers at Rome, be they weak or strong, to hearty concord; and mutual embracing one of another as becometh brethren, and christian brethren, he in these two verses beginneth with a word of prayer, and a sweet ejaculation to God, to shew how earnest he was about the thing; and that which he prayeth for is oneness of heart and affection, and

and oneness of judgment, as that which would help them to bear with, and heartily embrace one another, and banish away all ground and occasion of strife and contention. And he seteth down the end or advantage of this excellent favour, verse 6. And this prayer of his he handfomely kniteth with his former purpose, where he was speaking of the usefulness of the written word of God for patience and comfort; now he leads them beyond the scriptures for these things, and so teacheth them to look upon the scriptures but as a mean, and to look to God as the author; therefore he says, *Now the God of patience and consolation*, that God that works patience and comfort in folk by the scriptures, *grant that you be like-minded*, give you this precious gift of unanimity, and oneness of judgment: *according to Christ Jesus*; I would not have you labouring for unanimity in a wrong cause, or in an error, or for a wrong end, but in truth, as members of one head, Christ, in sincerity, in a christian manner, so as becometh Christians, minding to please Christ: Then he addeth the end, *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God*, &c. that ye may be in a capacity to join together with heart and tongue to sing the praises of God; which is amplified by this, that he is *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is not enough for ministers, to be pressing points of duty upon people; but moreover, knowing how little effectual all their planting and watering will be, without the increase be given of God, 1 Cor. iii. 7. they must be wrestling with God, for the dew of his blessing; therefore he sends up this prayer to God, *Now the God of patience and of consolation, grant, &c.*

II. It is commendable in all, to be so going about their callings, in a world; and especially, in ministers, to be so discharging their duty in the ministry, particularly in preaching, and unfolding the mind of

God to people, as they may still keep their hearts in a christian and heavenly frame; and so near God, as they may dart up their ejaculations to him, and serious requests for his power, and blessing, after the example of the apostle here, who sayeth, *Now the God of patience and consolation, grant, &c.*

III. Tho' we be allowed to use the means, which God hath allowed us to make use of, for patience and consolation, or any other gift or blessing; yet we must not rest upon the means, but must look over these to God, the only author of every good gift and donation, and thence only expect the blessing; and yet withal we must not lay aside the use of means altogether as needless, but both must be joined together, the using of the means, and resting on Jehovah for the blessing: He spoke before of the scriptures as a mean to patience and consolation, saying, *patience and comfort of the scriptures*; and now, he points them to the principal cause, saying, *The God of patience and consolation*.

IV. Howbeit men may win to a need-forced patience, which looks rather like stupidity and senselessness under an affliction, than true patience; yet, none can win to that true christian, saving sort of patience, but these upon whom God is pleased to bestow it; and this patience is a special gift of God, whence he is called, *The God of patience*.

V. The right sort of comfort, and hearty rejoicing, is that which is wrought in the soul, by the hand of God, and from that airth it cometh, and from none lower; it is God's prerogative to speak comfort to the sad and troubled soul; he is *the God of comfort*, or consolation. See 2 Cor. i. 3. 4.

VI. Unity of judgment and affection, at all times, but especially in a time of abounding offences and divisions, thro' diversity of judgment, is lovely and most desirable; and as ministers should endeavour all that lieth in their power, to unite the hearts of dissenters among the flock; so
should

should they earnestly wrestle with God, by prayer and supplication, that he would unite the heads and the hearts of people together, as the apostle doth here, saying, *Now the God of patience and consolation, grant that ye be like-minded one towards another.*

VII. It is not enough that we labour for unity of judgment, but we should also endeavour to have this unity and concord running in a right channel; this unity should be in gospel truth, in sincerity and truth, and sought for in a christian manner, proposing Christ as our pattern and example, and looking to him as our common head, and on it as a piece of honour to our head Jesus, and as only becoming the members of such a body whereof Christ is head: It must be *according to Christ*.

VIII. Tho' many means may be essayed to bring such as are of different judgments to an harmonious concord, and many motives used to press them to it, and much pains taken for the effectuating of it; yet all will be in vain, if God put not to his hand: It is a work of his right hand, who hath the hearts and judgments of people in his own hand; for Paul sends up his prayer to God for this blessing of being of one mind: *The God of patience grant that ye be like-minded.*

IX. As God is most glorious and excellent in himself, so ought he to be extolled, and proclaimed as glorious and matchless, by all his children, tho' he need not their proclamation to set him forth, nor will any increase of glory arrive to him thereby; yet it is their duty, to be trumpeters of his praises: *That we might glorify God.* See Psal. xxvii. 23. and I. 15. Isa. xxiv. 15. 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Pet. iv. 16.

X. It is not enough, that people sing forth the praises of God with their mouths, and so render him the calves of their lips; but also, as in all other pieces of service and worship, so in this, the heart should go along with the tongue; and they should have hearts filled with high appre-

hensions of his greatness and transcendent excellency, when they are about to extol and glorify this great God: *That with one heart and mouth ye may glorify God, &c.*

XI. As it is the duty of Christians to be magnifying the Lord apart, so it is their duty to be doing it jointly with others, in a harmonious melodious manner, singing forth the praises of him that liveth for ever; this is the end, why he wisheth so earnestly for unity among them, viz. *That with one heart and mouth they might glorify God.*

XII. Where there is diversity of judgment in things practicable, and debates arising thereupon hotly prosecuted, it much mars and obstructs that joint harmonious concurring in the praises of God that is called for, and maketh a foul discord, marring the beauty of that excellent and necessary service; for where there is not one mind, they cannot with one heart and mouth glorify God: that they might thus harmoniously glorify God, he prayeth that God would grant, that they might be of one mind.

XIII. So lovely and desirable, should the exercise of harmonious praising and extolling of God be unto believers, that to the end this might be attained, they should seriously desire, earnestly endeavour after, and heartily intreat God for unity and concord; this moved Paul to desire and beg so earnestly at the hand of God, that they might be of a like mind, viz. *That they might glorify God with one heart and mouth.*

XIV. In our worshiping and glorifying of God we should labour to take up this God, the object of our worship, aright, and look upon him, 1. As one God in essence, in more persons, begetting by eternal generation, the Son, having the same essence with the Father. 2. As the fountain, principal cause and author of our salvation, being the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, commissionating him for the work, and sending him forth as Prophet, Priest and King. And, 3. As one who must be approached

proached unto, thro his Son, and so in a gospel manner, worshiped and served; all this is pointed forth in these words, *Even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

VERSE 7. *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.*

AFTER this sweet and earnest supplication to God, for the Spirit of unity to be poured upon them, he draws out the conclusion, containing, an earnest and serious desire, that they would study unity, and endeavour after this rare and matchless blessing; *Wherefore receive ye one another*, because of all this which I have said, and of the necessity and usefulness of this oneness of judgment, which you may learn from my serious suing God for it, you should now set about the heart-embracing, kindly entertaining, and brotherly bearing with one another, be ye Jews or Gentiles: And this again he presseth with a new argument, as if all which he hath said already would not suffice; *As Christ also received us, to the glory of God*: Christ was so far from despising us, be we Jews or Gentiles, that, on the contrary, he dealt tenderly, warmly and lovingly with us; he bowed low to lift us up, that we might be partakers of the glory of God.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The use-making of that enriching mean of prayer for any thing we desire, should not in the least slack our diligence in the pursuit of that which we ask in prayer, by other lawful means; for tho' he was praying to God for unity and concord among them, yet he makes use of serious exhortation thereto, and thereby teaching them, that tho' he was praying to God, and so teaching them to pray likewise, for unity, yet he would not have them resting there, but setting about the use of other means to win to it; and therefore exhorteth them *to receive one another.*

II. Such a sympathy and heart-uniting should be among all the members of Christ's body, be they strong or weak, be they young or old; that they should all join together, mutually embrace one another, support, and bear with one another, bind up one another's wounds and infirmities, and so heartily join together as one; they should *receive one another.*

III. Were believers minding this duty, which each of them owe to other, of receiving, hearty loving, and tender embracing of one another, there would be more unity, and christian concord among them than there is; backwardness in uniting with one another, breedeth animosities, and heart discontentments, and so fostereth division and dissention; and therefore, that they might be like minded one towards another, he presseth them to *receive one another.*

IV. When there is a breach among Christians, by reason of division, and the fire of contention and heat, ministers, whose duty it is mainly to help to amend the breach, should be essaying all means for effectuating this, both in wrestling with God, and in dealing with the people to get them brought to mutual, christian, brotherly embracing of one another, and doing duties called for from them to one another; for after prayer and supplication to God for this unity and concord, he presseth the people to *receive one another.*

V. When people see the minister serious in pressing some point as most necessary, and so serious that he is wrestling with God for the same, it should lay strong bonds on Christians, to be laying such a duty much to heart, and by all means to be endeavouring the attaining of that which is so earnestly pressed for: Upon the back of his prayer he cometh in with a *wherefore receive ye one another.*

VI. Christ's wonderful condescension and stooping low, by taking upon him the form of a servant, Phil. ii. 7. and being made under the law, Gal. iv. 4. and humbling

bling himself, becoming obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross, Phil. ii. 8. that he might help up poor things who were lying in the puddle of sin and misery, should strongly press believers to stoop low, and be condescending for the good of their brethren, and to be warmly and heartily taking other in their bosom; therefore he addeth, *Even as Christ also received us.*

VII. The advantage which believers get by Christ, and his wonderful condescending to become of no reputation, is great and excellent, even no less than glory; yea, and the glory of God: and it is by Christ's death and merits, that this glory is purchased unto people; and glory, and nothing else, will be the upshot of Christ's dealing with his people; however they be exercised in a world, yet this is their purchased portion at length; and as they have a right to it now, thro' Christ's death, so shall they, in due time, be put in possession thereof: *As Christ also received us, to the glory of God.*

VERSES 8. 9. - *Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.*----

THE apostle being now speaking both to Jews and Gentiles, and having exhorted both to receive one another, and made use of this argument to persuade both, that Christ had received them both, (that is, he had welcomed both into his church, and believers of both he would take into glory:) now he clearth this argument more, and sheweth how it is true, that Christ hath received both Jews and Gentiles; *Now I say*; this is the thing I am saying, *That Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision*; that is, he subjected himself to be a servant and minister, for preaching the gospel and glad tidings

of salvation to the Jews, filed by circumcision, as Rom. iv. 12. and by thus preaching of the gospel, he received both Jews and Gentiles, only with this difference, that the first offer of life was to be made to the Jews, and Christ was to be, as it were, peculiarly set forth for them, because of the truth of God, who had made solemn promises unto the fathers, in covenanting with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and making a promise to them of the Messias, and of salvation thro' him, to their posterity: *It was for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers.* But as to the Gentiles it was a mere act of mercy and free grace, there having no promise thereof been made to them before, or to their forefathers; however, it was foretold how they should be brought in by the Messias, and receive good, yet there was no covenant made, or promise passed upon it, as to them: *And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.* And seeing thus, Christ hath received both, each of you ought to receive one another; and there should no more be any discord or dryness betwixt you, Jew and Gentile.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Such was the love that our Lord Jesus Christ had unto the salvation of poor sinners, that tho' he was the exalted Lord, equal with the Father, yet he became of no reputation, and came in the form of a servant, and submitted himself to mean service, that he might do them good, whom he had a mind to save: *He was made a minister of the circumcision.*

II. The fathers before the law, and under the law, were saved by the same Mediator, that we under the gospel are saved by; the same Christ was promised then, who is now sent forth as the truth of all promises; grace and truth came by him, John i. 17.: *He was a minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.*

III. Tho' they had the same way to salvation,

ſalvation, which we now have; yet it was not then ſo clearly unfolded and declared, as now it is; the fathers had it only wrapped up in ſo many promiſes: *To confirm the promiſes made unto the fathers.*

IV. Tho' the people of the Jews had many ſweet and excellent promiſes, variously expreſſed; yet they did all drive at this one, *viz.* The promiſe of the Meſſiah, the horn of ſalvation, Luke i. 69. this was the upſhot of all; and Chriſt coming in the fleſh, to ſave his people, is the fulfilling of all: *Chriſt Jeſus was a miniſter of the circumciſion for the truth of God, to confirm the promiſes made to the fathers.*

V. The people of the Jews being a covenanted people to God, by virtue of the covenant made with Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, had a ſpecial ground to look for the Saviour of mankind, having a promiſe, that he ſhould come of them; for it was promiſed to Abraham, that in his ſeed ſhould all the nations of the earth be ſaved; and whatever ground of expectation the Gentiles had, it was by virtue of the promiſes made to the Jews, and the fathers, and ſome prophecies: ſo that, when Chriſt came into the world, he walked a while, as if he had been only ſent to ſave the people of the Jews, Matth. xv. 24. limiting his diſciples to theſe bounds alſo, at the firſt, Matth. x. 5. 6. and they were to have the firſt offer of life, thro' him, Acts xiii. 46. *Jeſus Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion for the truth of God, to confirm the promiſes made to the fathers.*

VI. Tho' the coming of Chriſt, in the fleſh, was a rich mercy unto the Jews, yet was it ſuch a mercy, as was promiſed by a covenant, Luke i. 72. 73. and tho' free grace and mercy made the promiſe, yet truth and fidelity were engaged for the performance unto them. But unto the Gentiles, with whom no ſuch covenant was entered, nor no ſuch promiſe made to them covenant-ways; it was pure mercy and free grace: *Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion for the truth of God;—and*

that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

VII. This great and wonderful mercy of Chriſt being manifeſted in the fleſh, and that for the good of the Gentiles, who had no promiſe made them of ſuch a mercy, ſhould ſtrongly oblige them to ſing forth the praiſes of God, and extol his matchleſs goodneſs, to his endleſs glory and honour: *And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.*

VIII. Tho' the Gentiles had no covenanted promiſe, made to themſelves immediately, whereupon they could ground any faith of receiving good of the Meſſias: yet the extending of the arms of the Meſſias beyond the borders of the church of the Jews, towards the Gentiles, was a mercy frequently foretold, and indeed promiſed as a ſpecial benefit unto Abraham, Gen. xxii. 18.; for he confirmeth what he ſaid touching the Gentiles, with ſeveral places of ſcripture. See Acts xiii. 47.

VERSES 9. 10. 11. 12. --- *As it is written, For this cauſe I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles, and ſing unto thy name. And again he ſaith, Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye people. And again Eſaias ſaith, There ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, and he that ſhall riſe to reign over the Gentiles; in him ſhall the Gentiles truſt.*

THE apoſtle thinks it fit further to ſpeak to this buſineſs, touching the Gentiles, and becauſe it was a matter of ſome concernment, for the conſolation of the Gentiles, and conviction of the Jews, he citeth ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture, to ſhew how it was foretold long ago, and conſtantly ſpoken of, as a thing that would be. And, 1. He citeth a word, Pſal. xviii. 49. where David, as a type of Chriſt, is ſpeaking, and prophesieth that there ſhall be brave days among the Gentiles, and

that he, that is Christ, should confess or praise God among the Gentiles, and so, he should have the Gentiles flocking round about him, and by his Spirit he should stir them up to sing a song to God, and himself should offer up the sacrifice of praise unto the Father. The next is out of Deut. xxxii. 43. where Moses is about to leave the people, and he will part with them in mirth, and therefore he sings a song, to the praise of his God; and in the place here cited, he calleth in the heathen nations, the Gentile people, to rejoice and sing unto the Lord, with his covenanted people; and so prophesieth, that the day shall come, when Jew and Gentile shall make up one church, and send up one harmonious song unto God's praise, for his goodness. The third passage is from Psal. cxvii. 1. where the psalmist, by the spirit of prophecy, foreseeing the conversion of the Gentiles, and the wonderful mercies of God manifested unto them, is calling upon them to praise the Lord: certainly then, there should be brave days among the Gentiles, and glorious days of the gospel, and they should be inchurched. The last place is from Isa. xi. 10. where the apostle followeth the Seventy (as he doth in the former) and so, varieth a little from the original, but the sense is the same. There, there is a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ; and says he, *There shall be a root of Jesse; that is, Christ, who shall spring from the loins of David the son of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign; or, that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; to him shall the Gentiles seek, and in him shall they trust*; Christ shall be a glorious king, and shall have the Gentile nations as a part of his kingdom; they shall come flocking to him, as to a banner spread forth, and shall shelter themselves there. Therefore it was an old prophecy, that the Gentiles should have brave days under Christ's kingdom and reign, and should glorify God for his mercy in sending them such a Mediator and Redeemer.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. When it may be useful and necessary, for the convincing and raising up the hearts of the hearers, ministers may be large in confirming points of truth, and tho' places of scripture need not always be multiplied, yet sometimes necessity will call for citing more places than one or two: therefore the apostle, who oftentimes contents himself with one or two passages, thinketh fit to cite more here, because the Jews were still insulting over the Gentiles; and now he would lay their proud boasting, by shewing how the conversion of the Gentiles was prophesied of by Moses and the prophets: ---*As it is written,---and again,---and again, &c.*

II. That the Gentiles should be brought in, as fellow-heirs with the Jews, in the days of the Messias, is a truth foretold by Moses, and the prophets, David and Isaiah, which should make the fulfilling of these prophecies more lovely unto us; for he proves this by testimonies from Moses, David and Isaiah: *As it is written.*

III. Mercies received, will then be sweetest, when received as the kindly effects and fruits of old love, and as the accomplishing of a promise; and a mercy being received as a fruit of a promise, becometh a double mercy; therefore doth the apostle shew how the receiving of the Gentiles into the church, is that which was foretold; *As it is written.*

IV. The Lord may have thoughts of good towards a people, long before the same begin to kyth; love towards a people may run long under ground, and will break up at length; for we see God had old thoughts towards the Gentiles, even when he was beginning to model the Jews into a church-state, and yet it brake not up till the due time, till the coming of the Messias, and then this love vented in a great measure: *As it is written.*

V. To sing praise unto the name of the Lord, for his great and mighty works of salvation

ſalvation, is a moſt ſuitable work for a people newly brought into a covenant-ſtate with God; and new converts are ordinarily much taken up with ſongs of praiſe to the God of their ſalvation. This is foretold of the Gentiles, when converted, that they ſhall confeſs and ſing unto God; and this is a mark of their being brought into a covenant ſtate: *I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles.*

VI. As the people of God, can perform no ſpiritual acceptable ſervice, nor the ſervice of praiſe in particular, without Chriſt their head ſend influences of his Spirit for ſtirring them up thereto, and perfume them with his mediation, that they may be accepted; ſo, when praiſe is thus rightly performed, Chriſt is concurring with theſe ſongs, and by his note making them melodious, and to be accepted of the Father: *I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles* (ſays Chriſt) *and I will ſing unto thy name.*

VII. As the deliverances wrought by the hand of God, in the behalf of his church and people, are many and wonderful, ſo ſhould the ſame be acknowledged by his people, and they ſhould look upon it as their duty to extol and ſet forth the praiſes of him that liveth for ever and ever: *Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye people.*

VIII. Tho' all his creatures be bound to ſing a ſong of praiſe to their Creator and daily Maintainer, yet there are no people that can rightly diſcharge this excellent duty, but thoſe in covenant with him and his church; for this proveth that the Gentiles ſhould be enchurch'd, becauſe the days would come when they ſhould *praiſe the Lord, and laud him.*

IX. As the Lord is letting out of himſelf moſt wonderfully and graciously unto his church and people, beyond all others, ſo doth he call for, at their hands, the lively expreſſing of their ſenſe of the unſpeakable riches and advantage of theſe favours he is beſtowing upon them, by rejoicing in a hearty and ſpiritual manner: *Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people.*

X. Tho' ſtrangers to a covenant with God may have ſome carnal joy, upon ſome carnal and worldly account; yet it is only his people who are in covenant with God, who can rightly join together in making an harmonious melody unto the Lord, and in expreſſing the joy of their hearts unto God; and whenever any are taken into covenant with God, this heart-rejoicing is expected from them: *Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people.*

XI. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the promiſed Meſſias, as he came of David the ſon of Jeſſe, and ſo was a ſprig of that root, as he was man, Iſa. xi. 1. and hence he is oft called the root of David, Heb. v. 5. and xxii. 16. ſo, as God man in one perſon, he is become a root unto all his people, making them to grow in him, thro' life and ſap, communicated to them by the influences of his Spirit: *There ſhall be a root of Jeſſe.*

XII. This Meſſias, our Mediator, by his kingly power, ſubdueth his people under him, and bringeth them from under the jurisdiction and tyranny of Satan, the prince of darkneſs, and for this cauſe, he diſplayeth the banner of the goſpel, that he may gather them together to be a people to himſelf: *He ſhall riſe, and* (as it is in Iſaiah) *He ſhall ſtand as an enſign of the people.*

XIII. Theſe whom Chriſt ſubdueth to himſelf, and by his power bringeth under his banner and ſtandard, he alſo as a king ruleth and governeth, not only inwardly, by his Spirit, but even outwardly by his laws and his church government, which he only ſettleth as head and king of the church, *He ſhall reign over the Gentiles,* as an embodied people, and as nations.

XIV. When Chriſt has once diſplayed his banner of the goſpel, and is ſending it forth with power, then there is a great flocking of people thereunto. When the glory and excellency of this king is ſeen, and the rich magnificence and ſplendour of his kingdom, then the hearts of people are won to him, and they are made willing to come in: When he ſhall riſe and ſet up a

standard, that shall reign over the Gentiles, then *shall the nations seek for him*, and resort to him, as it is in the original. See Acts ii.

XV. Such as come to Christ aright, as they come from felt necessity, seeing themselves lost and undone otherways, so they come with a persuasion, that there is help and safety for them in Christ, and in none else; and they come with a resolution to rest upon Christ for life and salvation, and from him alone do they expect it: *In him shall the Gentiles trust.*

VERSE 13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope thro' the power of the Holy Ghost.*

THE apostle being now closing his discourse unto them, ends with a word of prayer, thereby shewing how desirous he was to have it going well with them, and what they should be mainly minding and studying; they were taken with debates and strife about matters of small moment, he would have them minding more necessary debates, even these things in which the kingdom of God did consist, such as peace, joy, faith and hope; for all these he prayeth, and for these waded together in an excellent manner: So then, 1. he prayeth to God, whom he takes up under a notion suitable to the desires he was to put up, *The God of hope*; the God who is the author of this grace of hope. 2. He prayeth for, (1.) joy; (2.) peace; (3.) faith; (4.) hope. 3. He prayeth for these tempered together in a notable manner; for joy and peace in believing, and resting on Christ; and then, as a sweet fruit and effect of this, for hope; that ye may abound in hope. 4. He prayeth for no scanty portion of these: *Fill you with all joy, and abound in hope.* 5. He prayeth for them in a right method and manner, *thro' the power of the Holy Ghost*, whereby all these are wrought.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Ministers as they would be careful to press duties upon people, with all seriousness, so, considering how it is God only who must give the increase, they should roll the stress of the business over on God, and by prayer and supplication wrestle with him for virtue and influence, for the working of these things in people; for after all his exhortation and large discourse, tending to discover truth, and point out duty, he closeth his sermon with a prayer: *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy.*

II. The prayers of the ministers of God, in public, ought to be suitable to the people's present case and condition, and not fixed set forms; for the apostle is here praying for peace and joy in believing, as being most profitable and necessary for them in that exigence, when they were taken up with jars and debates, which occasioned sadness in their walk with God, and so bemisted them as to their hope; and this is different from the former prayer, uttered, ver. 5. *The God of hope, fill you with all peace and joy in believing, &c.*

III. In our addresses to God, as we ought to have sensible apprehensions of our wants, and of the necessity we stand in of these particulars we are to seek, that thereby our desires may be sharpened, so should we have suitable apprehensions of God, as able and willing to grant what we desire, that thereby our faith in prayer may be strengthened; for the apostle being to pray for the increase of their hope, takes up God in a suitable manner, as the author, fountain and only worker of hope: *The God of hope fill you, &c.*

IV. As the Lord is the only object of a soul's hope and trust, Jer. xvii. 7. and l. 7. Joel iii. 16. Acts xxiv. 15. so is he the only worker of that hope, in a soul, which is lively, 1 Pet. i. 3. and is the anchor of the soul, Heb. vi. 19. whereby it lays hold on eternal life, Tit. iii. 7. and is a helmet to the soul, 1 Thess. v. 8. he is *the God of hope*.

hope, upon this account. See 1 Pet. i. 3. 2 Thess. ii. 16. Plal. cxix. 49.

V. However poor, ignorant, brutish people, think it an easy thing to believe, and a matter which they will easily accomplish with their own strength; yet it is one of those good and perfect gifts that cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, and is wrought in the soul of a poor convinced and self-condemned sinner only by the hand of God: *Fill you with all joy and peace in believing.* See Heb. xii. 2. Eph. ii. 8. Phil. i. 29.

VI. Tho' carnal wretches, because of their prosperity in a world, may cheer up their spirits in a carnal manner, and win to some carnal joy upon that account, and proclaim rest to themselves; and hypocrites may have some sudden flashes that will not last, Job xx. 5. yet it is only true believers, who have gripped to Christ, according to the tenor of the covenant, that win to solid, spiritual, heavenly joy: it is *joy in believing.*

VII. This spiritual soul-rejoicing is only wrought in a soul by God; it is only the work of his hand, who can discover the riches of grace and of glory unto a believer, and clear up his interest in Christ, and the certainty of his happy condition: *The God of hope fill you with all joy.* See Plal. li. 8. Isa. lxi. 3. Gal. v. 22.

VIII. Tho' only true believers are made partakers of this everlasting joy, and strangers meddle not therewith; yet it is not common to all believers at all times; it is a supervenient special gift of God bestowed on whom, of believers, and at what time, it seemeth good in the Lord's eyes: --- *Fill you with all joy in believing.* He prayeth for this joy besides faith, and joy in believing; for true faith layeth a ground for joy.

IX. As the Lord is not straitened in his bowels towards his own people, but lets out his favours liberally and largely; so doth he allow his people who have fled to Christ for refuge, strong consolation and

fulness of joy, and communicateth the same according to his free grace; and this fullness of joy, and of all joy, may be asked of God with submission: --- *Fill you with all joy in believing.* See 1 Pet. i. 8. 1 John i. 4. Acts xiii. 52. 2 Tim. i. 4.

X. Tho' sinners may bless themselves in their own ways, and cry peace when the Lord alloweth none, and may have a conscience plagued with deadness and the spirit of a deep sleep; yet true and sound peace of conscience is proper only to believers, and none knoweth what it means but such as have embraced the offer of a Mediator: *Fill you with peace in believing.*

XI. Tho' believers be-reconciled to God, and put into a state of peace and friendship with him, having their iniquities pardoned, upon their closing a bargain with Christ and believing; yet they may be long without the sweet sense of this favour and good-will of God, and may wrestle long with disquietness of conscience, till God, of his free grace and love, speak peace, and send a calm into the soul: this peace is a distinct favour from faith, and cometh after it, when and in what measure the God of peace thinketh meet: *Fill you with all joy and peace in believing.* See Phil. iv. 9. 1 Thess. v. 23. Heb. xiii. 20. 21.

XII. Among other graces which the Lord bestoweth upon his people, as helpful in their journey towards the crown, hope is one, whereby the soul of a poor believer is kept up from sinking, through temptation and other discouragements, by a well grounded expectation of a happy outgate, and of life and immortality at length: *That your hope may abound.* See 1 Cor. xiii. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 12. Lam. iii. 21.

XIII. The Lord has thought fit so to dispense with his children, that tho' he bestow upon them the seeds and habits of all graces at once, yet he actuateth and bloweth upon them by the south-wind of his Spirit, and maketh them increase and grow to what measure he thinketh fit, in some to a greater, in others to a lesser

measure; and the greater the measure be, the better for the believer; here there is mention made of hope abounding, *That your hope may abound.*

XIV. Believers, thro' God's goodness, may win to such a degree of hope, as will lift them up above difficulties and seeming improbabilities that ly in their way, and settle their soul in the midst of discouragements, hushing all doubts and perplexing thoughts: the apostle's praying that *their hope might abound*, says, that such a thing may be attained. See Rom. iv. 18.

XV. The infinitely wise God hath so linked the graces, which he bestoweth upon his children, and so ordered them, that whoever would win to the lively exercise of any of them, must follow the method which God hath made in their concatenation: Thus we see here, that faith goes before peace and joy, and peace and joy in believing goeth before the abounding of hope: *That your hope might abound.* See Eph. i. 13. 14.

XVI. The way how God works these graces in the souls of his own people, is, by the operation of his blessed Spirit; and this is the order of God's works in and about his children, the Father is the principal cause, working all by and thro' the Spirit; therefore he addeth, *Through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

XVII. Such a hard and difficult thing is it to get grace wrought in the soul of a miserable sinner, and such opposition is made thereto by the deceitful heart, and Satan, that no less will do the work than the mighty power of God: *Through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

VERSES 14. 15. *And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God.*

NOW followeth the conclusion of the whole epistle. In that part thereof which is contained in this chapter, he speaketh to these three things, 1. Anent his writing to them in such a manner, to verse 22. 2. Anent his coming and making a visit to them, to verse 30. 3. He setteth them on work to wrestle with God in his behalf.

It might have been objected, What need you have wrote such a large epistle to us, and inveighed so sore against us? thought ye we had no knowledge of God at all? In answering to this, he *first* professeth he had not such low thoughts of them; he knew there were many amongst them whose faith was spoken of throughout all the world, Rom. v. 8. and so he had not such thoughts of them; and therefore he says, *I myself am persuaded of you, brethren*, 1. *that ye also are full of goodness*; I know certainly, brethren, (such a warm and hearty compellation he useth, the more to insinuate upon them,) that ye are of a gentle nature and disposition, meek and tender, and have the grace of God amongst you. 2. *Filled with all knowledge*; I look not upon you as a company of ignorant people, but as such as have win to much more knowledge of God and his truths than others; yea, so much as, 3. *You are able also to admonish one another*; you are able to become doctors, and to give brotherly admonitions and instructions to one another. 2dly, He giveth the true grounds of his freedom and boldness in writing to them: For all this, brethren, *I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort*; I have not spared to tell my mind unto you somewhat freely, 1. because I would *put you in mind*; tho' you have much knowledge, yet you have need to be put in mind of truths, and of your duty. 2. *Because of the grace that is given to me of God*; I am put into a holy charge of the ministry; God of his free grace hath called me, first out of nature, and next to be a minister of the gospel for him;

him; and this grace of being an apostle is given to me of God, and I must be true to my trust, and mind the duty lying upon me by my office:

From verse 14. OBSERVE,

I. Oftentimes such as have any measure of knowledge, are so puffed up therewith, that they can hardly endure to be freely dealt with by any, and are ready to imagine, that such as deal freely with them have low and base thoughts of them, and do not esteem them according to their worth and deserving: so did the Romans here imagine of Paul, which constrained him to make apology for his freedom in speaking to them: *I myself am persuaded of you, my brethren.*

II. When people entertain prejudices at ministers, and imagine with themselves that they undervalue them below their worth, and the good which they have, they readily cast at free exhortations, and these prejudices mar their profiting by the ministry and labours of these servants of God: therefore doth the apostle labour to root out these prejudices out of their hearts, lest thereby they should be kept from drinking in the truths delivered by him.

III. Ministers ought to use all means possible, to keep up a good understanding betwixt them and the people they are set over, and to remove mistakes, and any conceited grounds of prejudices that are between them, lest the fruit of their ministry be marred, and the good of souls hindered; after the example of the apostle here, who, to remove the imagined ground of a mistake, tells them, that he was persuaded of their goodness and knowledge: *I myself am persuaded of you, &c.*

IV. It is useful sometimes to threap good upon people, providing it be done soberly, prudently, and not in a flattering way, speaking nothing but truth, and, without, doing it seasonably, when the doing thereof will not foster pride nor conceit in people, but will make way, and open a

door for receiving of wholesome admonitions and profitable directions; as the apostle doth here threap good upon these Romans, to the end his freedom in speaking to them might be the better welcomed, and less exception might be made against it: *And I myself am persuaded of you, &c.*

V. It is a commendable thing to see people of a gentle, meek, calm disposition, ready to take well with admonitions and instructions, and not to spurn and storm at reproofs and directions, and ready also to condescend to the helping forward of others in the course of godliness; *I am persuaded that you are full of goodness*, and so will take well with my admonitions and instructions, and will be helpful to others, and so give proof of God's grace in you.

VI. So it is commendable in people to be growing in the knowledge of Christ under the ministry of the gospel, and to be so far advanced therein, as to be able to give lessons and instructions to one another; this is the other thing he commendeth them for, that they were *filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another,*

From verse 15. OBSERVE,

I. It becometh the messengers of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be delivering their message with confidence, and to be using boldness and freedom of speech in exhorting and reproving people; they should do it with all authority, Tit. ii. 15. as their Master Christ Jesus did, Mark. i. 22. Matth. vii. 29. with all boldness, Acts ix. 27. 29. xiv. 3. xviii. 6. and xix. 8. knowing whose ambassadors they are, what commands they are under, Isa. lvi. 1. what hazard both themselves, Jer. i. 17. and the people, Ezek. iii. 18. 19. are in, if freedom and boldness be not used: *I have written the more boldly.*

II. Freedom and boldness in uttering the mind of God unto people, whether by way of instruction or reproof, may consist very well with love and estimation of such with whom that boldness is used: *I am per-*

persuaded, says he, you are filled with all knowledge, &c. and yet he addeth, *Nevertheless, I have written the more boldly unto you.*

III. The ablest and best instructed Christians have oftentimes need of a word of awakening, to rouse them up, and to bring even these truths which they have known formerly into their mind, that they may be rightly improved; therefore he says, *I have written the more boldly unto you, as putting you in mind.* See 2 John 5.

IV. The ablest Christian that is, ought to bear well with freedom at the hands of the faithful servants of Christ, and to hear such truths oftentimes inculcated which they have known formerly, knowing how ready they are to let precious truths ly buried under ashes, and either forget them altogether, or lay them by as useless, and not improve them aright: therefore to mitigate them, he tells them, that his freedom and boldness was to put them in mind; *as putting you in mind.*

V. The serious consideration and fresh viewing of a call, which ministers have of God to go about the duties of their calling, will sharpen their zeal, and make them use boldness and freedom in rebuking sin, and stirring up to duty, knowing it is he who is their master, and to whom they must be accountable, and in whose name and authority they come forth: that which made the apostle write the more boldly unto them; was his call he had to that employment of God; *because, says he, of the grace that is given to me of God.*

VI. Would people consider how ministers are put to that employment by the Lord, and must carry themselves therein as they will be answerable to the great God of heaven and earth, and must therefore be faithful and free with people, and declare the whole counsel of God, they would not storm so much at ministers freedom and boldness in delivering to them the mind of God: the apostle tells them this to lenify them, that he wrote the more

boldly, because of the grace that was given to him of God.

VII. As it is a high and honourable employment to be carriers of the message of the new covenant of grace, and to be ambassadors for Christ to woo a bride to him; so it is conferred on none for any merit or good deserving in them, but freely of God's free love and grace; and it becometh all employed therein, to be keeping mean thoughts of themselves, and high and honourable thoughts of the office, and of God's free grace in putting them thereinto; therefore when he is speaking of the office wherein God had put him, he says, *The grace that is given to me of God.*

VERSE 16. *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

THIS last argument, which was taken from his calling wherein God had put him, he amplifieth and explaineth further, to verse 22. and first in this verse he explaineth what that grace was which God had given to him, by an allegory, borrowing some speeches from the Levitical law, saying, *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ; this is the work he was called to, to be a public minister and officer unto Jesus Christ: to the Gentiles; for the use and benefit of the Gentiles, to convert them unto Christ: ministering the gospel of God; that is, playing the part of a priest about the gospel, exercising myself therein, and giving myself thereunto, as being all my work; and that to this end, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be accepted; that I might get the Gentiles offered up as a sacrifice to God, and made willing to give up themselves unto Christ, by the preaching of the gospel, and accepted of God as a sacrifice well-pleasing to him. But how? Being sanctified (as all sacrifices behoved to be washen and cleansed,) by the*

the Holy Ghost, his power and operation; and therefore ye Gentiles ought to take well off my hand what I deliver to you, seeing, 1. I am made a public person and officer. 2. A public officer of Jesus Christ. 3. A public officer, having no other work but the gospel to handle. 4. And am peculiarly set apart for you, to do the duties of my calling among you. 5. And all for your good, that ye may be offered up to God, and accepted of him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is useful and profitable sometimes for ministers to be affecting and maintaining their calling to the ministry, providing it be done prudently, not out of pride and vain ostentation; but when the case of the people necessarily calleth for it, and the doing of it may tend to usher in upon the heart of the people, some useful and necessary point of instruction, as here we see the apostle doth.

II. It will be sometimes for the advantage of people to have the nature of the ministerial calling unfolded and laid open before them, and it will serve much to remove mistakes and prejudices, and to make way for a welcoming of truths which otherways would be laid aside; therefore Paul seeth it necessary here to explain and lay out before them the nature of the ministry: *Grace given to me of God, that I might be a minister, &c.*

III. However such as God hath chosen unto the work of the ministry, be mean and contemptible persons in the world, in little esteem with the folks of the world; yet are they highly honoured by being put in a public office and charge, and employed therein for the good of others: They are ministers, or public officers; for the word in the original doth always hold forth and signify a public officer, and is therefore sometimes given to the magistrate, Rom. xiii. 6. to angels, Heb. i. 7. 14. to Christ, Heb. viii. 2. and to the

priests under the law, Luke i. 2. 3.: *That I might be a minister.*

IV. As God hath put a high piece of dignity upon such as he hath employed in the work of the ministry, so he hath not called them thereto, to be idle, but to be busily employed and painfully exercised; so that the office of the ministry, tho' honourable, yet is it laborious and painful: It is a ministry, a public employment; *the grace given to us, is, that we might be ministers.*

V. As Jesus Christ is the author and institutor of the office of the ministry, Eph. iv. 8. 11. 12.; so is he their master, whose advantage and honour they are to seek by all means, and for whose cause they ought to lay out themselves, to the utmost of their power and ability; and so ought they to carry themselves in all the pieces of their employment as serving such a master: *That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ.*

VI. As the Lord is to be eyed in the matter of fitting one for, and sending them forth unto the work of the ministry; so is he to be eyed in designing the peculiar charge and flock which every man is to oversee: He limited and restricted the apostle's ministry mainly to the Gentiles; *that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles.*

VII. The whole employment and work of the servants of God in the ministry, is about the glad tidings of salvation thro' the Mediator Jesus Christ: All their exercise is to unfold and make plain unto poor sinners the mystery of the gospel that was hid from the beginning of the world: *Ministring the gospel.*

VIII. This gospel about which the messengers of Christ are employed, is not the device of man; but the noble invention of the only wise and gracious Jehovah; hence it is called *the gospel of God*, by whom only this mystery was contrived, and who only giveth power and authority to his officers to promulgate the same.

IX. The main thing which the ministers

of the gospel ought to be driving at, in all their deportment in the office of the ministry, is the salvation and reconciliation of the people they have charge of: It should be their main study to get the people so wrought on at the heart, as to be willing to give up and dedicate themselves to the Lord and his service, and that God might be well pleased with them, and accept of them as his own; for Paul's end was, *that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable.*

X. No service we can do, will be accepted of God at our hands, till we be renewed and made new creatures, having the spirit of holiness dwelling and working in us, putting down the power of sin and corruption, and advancing the work of conformity to the image of God: The offering up of the Gentiles will not be acceptable till it be sanctified; *being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

XI. Whatever pains ministers of the gospel take in dealing with people, to press them to abstain from sins and iniquities, and to follow the ways of holiness; yet nothing of this kind will avail for the subduing of the body of death within, and blowing up the coal of grace there, till the spirit of God, which is the spirit of sanctification, the only worker of holiness in God's people, put to his hand: *Sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

XII. It is the want of the due consideration of the work of the ministry, of the nature and end of that employment, and how such are set in a public, honourable charge, and that by Christ, for the gaining of their souls by the sincere preaching of the gospel, that makes many think contemptuously of such as are in the ministry, and undervalue what they say, yea, and take up prejudices against them for their freedom in dealing with them, tho' thereby they be doing nothing but dressing, washing and painting up a sacrifice and oblation to God: This is the sum of the apostle's reason couched up in this verse,

that I should be a minister of Christ for the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

VERSES 17. 18. *I have therefore whereof I may glory thro' Jesus Christ, in these things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of these things, which Christ hath not wrought by me,----*

NEXT, he further amplifieth and explaineth this his office, by shewing the worth and excellency thereof; and this he doth, 1st, by shewing how highly he esteemed it; whatever others thought of it, for himself he would glory of it; and this he brings in as a consequence following upon what he said touching the nature thereof, verse 16. with a *therefore, I have therefore whereof I may glory*; I have cause then to think much of this honourable employment that Christ hath put me into, and to glory of it: And for clearing of this, he doth two things; 1. He giveth the ground of this his glorying in summing up the nature of the office in two words, *in these things which pertain to God*; that is, being employed in matters touching the worship and glory of God so nearly: See the like phrase, Heb. v. 1. where the nature of the office of the priesthood is thus set forth. 2. He qualifyeth this his glorying, *thro' Jesus Christ*; I look not upon any thing in myself to occasion this my glorying, but the ground of all is in Christ; he is the sole author of all. And this he further amplifieth and cleareth, ver. 18. by a reason, *For I will not dare to speak of any of those things, which Christ hath not wrought by me*; that is, whatever good I have done, in those things which pertain to God. I was but an instrument made use of by Christ, who only did the work; he it was who did all, so as I cannot for my heart mention any thing which he wrought not by me.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. However such as are employed in the work of the ministry are oftentimes in least estimation with the men of this world, being counted as the off-scourings of the earth, 1 Cor. iv. 13. and reviled and persecuted oftentimes, *ib.* ver. 12. yet the office itself in which they are set, being a high and honourable employment, it is the duty of all who are set in the same, to be accounting highly of it, and looking upon it as a great piece of honour put upon them that they are so employed: *I have therefore* (says Paul) *whereof to glory.*

II. A right look of the nature of this office of the ministry, by a gracious soul, will so counterbalance all the sad things which usually attend such, as they will see beauty and excellency in the same, and matter of holy boasting and rejoicing that ever they were employed therein: He concludeth this boasting from the view he had of the nature of the employment in the preceding verse; *I have therefore whereof to glory*: He would not think upon his being employed among the Gentiles, to get a sacrifice of them made to God, but he must fall out in exulting and rejoicing.

III. Tho' the servants of God ought not to be carnally proud, and vainly puffed up with the thoughts of their being advanced to that high and honourable employment of the ministry; yet it is both lawful and profitable sometimes for them, to be declaring and publishing the high account they have of the same, when done soberly, without affectation and pride, to the end that high and suitable thoughts of this office might be raised in the hearts of people; for it is for this end that Paul saith here, *I have therefore whereof to glory.*

IV. The office of the ministry is not for base and worldly matters, but for high, holy and heavenly operations; and such as are employed therein, should not be entangled with the things of this world, but should keep themselves with the matters of

God's worship and spiritual service, and the work of gaining souls to Christ by the gospel, and so walk in all the pieces of their deportment as becometh these who have the matters of God among their hands: *In those things which pertain to God*; this is the object of the work of the ministry about which it is conversant.

V. So ought we to boast of our being set in the office of the ministry, for the management of the matters of God, as not to rob Christ of his due, even of the glory of all the good which is done by us in that service: All our joy, rejoicing and boasting should tend to the honour of Christ; Paul glorieth not in himself, but in Christ, *I have therefore whereof to glory in Christ Jesus.*

VI. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only principal agent and worker of the work of grace and conversion in the souls of sinners; and men, how able and eminent soever, are but as so many instruments employed by Christ for this effect: Whatever noble works Paul wrought, the Spirit of Christ wrought them by him; *I will not speak of any of these things which Christ hath not wrought by me.*

VII. It becometh all the servants of Christ to be looking on themselves as mere instruments, unable to do any thing without the breathing of the Spirit of Jesus, to be giving Christ the honour and glory of all, whose due it is, and to be declaring this openly, that people may know whom to glorify for the great work of their salvation and conversion; and they ought not to rest upon man, but to look over the creature, to him who must act in and with the creature: *I will not dare to speak of any of these things which Christ hath not wrought by me.*

VERSES 18. 19. --- *To make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.*

Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

FOR the fuller demonstration of the glorious power of Christ working by him, in the work of the ministry, he sheweth, 1. The effect that was wrought, thro' the concurrence of the Spirit of Christ, and the end he was driving at, *to make the Gentiles obedient*; to work them into an obedient submission to the gospel. 2. The means how this was brought about; and these are either ordinary or extraordinary: The ordinary are *by word and deed*; *by word*, that is, by the preaching of the gospel, by disputing, conference in private and in public; *by deed*, that is, by his pains in travelling from place to place, by his assiduous care and pains in planting churches, by his labours and sufferings; in preaching, mentioned 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.: The extraordinary are, *thro' mighty signs and wonders*; that is, the wonders which was done by him, for the confirmation of the truth of the doctrine delivered by him, in curing diseases, casting out of devils, &c. according to that, Heb. ii. 4. and as was done by him, Acts xiii. 10, 11. xiv. 8, 9, 10. xvi. 18. xix. 11, 12. and xx. 10, 11, 12. Now, these signs and wonders are said to have a power with them, as being efficacious thro' the operation of the Spirit, for convincing of people of the truth of his doctrine. 3. The main efficient cause whereby these means, ordinary and extraordinary, were efficacious and effectual, *by the power of the Spirit of God*; this power went alongst with the means and made them effectual. 4. He sheweth the extent of his ministry, *from Jerusalem unto Illyricum*; a vast bounds, taking in many provinces and regions in Asia and Europe, so that we find he preached the gospel at Jerusalem, after at Damascus, Arabia, Gal. i. 17. Cesarea, Tarsus, Acts ix. 30. at Antioch, Acts xj. 30. xii. 25. and xiii. 1. Seleucia, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Antioch, and Pisidia, Acts xiii. Lycania, Acts xiv. Syria and Cilicia, Acts xv. 23. Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, Troas, Macedonia, Acts xvi. Thessalonica, Athens,

Acts xvii. Corinth, Ephesus, Acts xviii. Grecia, Acts xx. i. 2. Miletus, Acts xx. 15. Thus he went round about these regions and cities of Cilicia; Cappadocia, Pisidia, Bythnia, Pontus, Mysia, Macedonia, even to Illyricum, which some take to be Pannonia, where is the river Danubius, some for Slavonia bordering upon Hungary. Infinite were his travels and labours indeed! Now, says he, I went through all these countries, *fully preaching the gospel of Christ*; the original has it, *Fully filling or replenishing the gospel*; a metaphor taken from the filling of a net with fishes; I have filled the gospel with the Gentiles, or, in all these places I have declared the whole counsel of God.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As people are naturally ignorant of, and unacquainted with, the way of salvation thro' faith in Jesus Christ, which the only wise God hath, of his wonderful free grace and favour, condescended upon; so are they utterly unwilling to submit thereunto, and to be brought to like that way: The gospel must be sent out to make them *obedient*.

II. The great end and design of the gospel, which men are commissioned to carry unto people, is but to work people unto a willingness to submit to that device of God for bringing lost sinners unto salvation, thro' a cautioner, tendered in a covenant of free grace; *to make the Gentiles obedient*.

III. The bringing of a soul into Christ, and of a people to be willing to submit unto the gospel, and unto the way of salvation which God hath carved out, is a work beyond the strength of the arm of flesh; and no less power will be able to effectuate this than the power of the Lord Jesus Christ: He wrought by Paul to the *making the Gentiles obedient*.

IV. Howbeit the work of conversion be the only work and effect of the powerful Spirit of Christ, without whose influence the same will never be wrought, the iron
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finew which is in all by nature will never be broken; yet it hath seemed good in the Lord's eyes to make use of frail men as his instruments in the effectuating of this great work, and of the seckless-like mean of man's preaching and proclaiming the tidings of salvation, and by word of mouth declaring and explaining the nature of the covenant, and the terms upon which salvation is had: *To make the Gentiles obedient by word.* See 1 Cor. i. 22. 25.

V. Not only should ministers hold forth Christ, and the way of salvation thro' him, by preaching, and publishing as heralds, the word of life; but also, in all their carriage and deportment, they should be preaching the gospel, and so walk both in their private and public employments, as they may be gaining sinners to Christ; and they ought to spare no pains, labour, or hazard, but venture on the worst that man can do, for the winning of souls *by word and deed*: Ministers must not rest upon a bare word speaking, but must resolve to hold forth Christ in deed.

VI. The very hardships, dangers and sufferings, that the servants of Christ meet with in the faithful discharge of the duties of their calling, thro' God's blessing, do much to the convincing of sinners, and to the gaining ground upon them, and bringing them in to the gospel: Even his deeds, thro' the blessing of God, his sufferings, perils, hardships, and the like, were a mean of making the Gentiles believe: *By word and deed.*

VII. It seemed good in the Lord's eyes, for the gaining of his own, and the rendering of the wicked inexcusable, to condescend so far, as not only to send forth men, with power to preach the gospel of life; but also to cloath them with such credentials, as might certify all that they had a divine commission, and were sent of God to deliver the doctrine of salvation thro' the Messias; and so to endue them with a power of working miracles, which none could do, but such as were assisted

by a divine Spirit: *Thro' mighty signs and wonders.* See Acts ii. 1. 2. 3. 4. 43. iii. 6. and iv. 29. 30. 31. so that the doctrine of salvation which is now preached, is undoubted truth, being confirmed by so many signs and wonders, so that there is no place left now for doubting, tho' the Lord keep not still that course of working miracles, which at the beginning and first breaking up of this truth, was thought necessary.

VIII. Even signs and wonders will not be sufficient to gain the consent of the soul unto the truth of the gospel, and to a hearty submitting thereunto, without the co-operation and concurrence of the Spirit of that God who hath the hearts of all in his hand; so hard a matter is it to win souls in unto this most desirable way of salvation thro' Christ; therefore he addeth, *by the power of the Spirit of God.*

IX. Such a work is the conversion of souls unto Christ; that all the three persons of the Trinity must be exercised thereabout. In the former verse there was mention made of the working of Christ, and here, mention is made of the *power of the Spirit*, and of the *spirit of God*; and tho' all of them have their hand about this, (as about all other works without themselves) yet they have their own order, the Father as the principal, and Christ as he to whom this dispensation is committed, and the Spirit as sent of Christ; therefore what he called before the power of Christ, he calleth here the power of the Spirit of God, to shew that Christ is true God, being so called here, and that Christ worketh in the gospel in and by his Spirit.

X. So great and profitable a work it is to gain souls to Christ by the gospel, James v. 20. and so great is the reward of such as are instrumental in the saving of sinners, Dan. xii. 3. and their danger so great who slight this work, Ezek. iii. and xxxiii. that such as are employed in the work of the ministry should spare no pains, travel, labour, and industry, to woo souls in to Christ;

Christ; Paul had infinite pains travelling betwixt Jerusalem and Illyricum, in preaching the gospel, a vast and very large bounds: See 2 Cor. xii. 15. He gave up his ease and other accommodations to do his Master service, and spared not to travel through many countries, to the often hazarding of his life.

XI. As the apostles and first founders of the christian church, were endued with extraordinary gifts and qualifications, fitting them for that extraordinary piece of work which they were employed about; so, for the further spreading of the gospel, their commission did extend far, and they had the broad world for their charge, and were to preach the gospel to every nation, as God in his providence directed: *From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, Paul preached the gospel.* See Matth. xxviii. 18. Mark xvi. 15.

XII. It is much to the commendation of the mighty power of God, when the gospel is spreading far and near, and is doing good in the places where it is preached: All this the apostle is shewing, that the glorious power of the Spirit of God might appear; and therefore he says, *From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel*; or, I have filled the gospel with souls as a net with fishes.

XIII. As ministers ought to be faithful, and withhold nothing of the good counsel of God where-ever providence calleth them; so ought they to preach nothing but the glad tidings of salvation through a Mediator; and in all their travel and labour among people, to be driving at nothing else but the hooking of poor souls in to Christ, and catching them in the net of the gospel: *I have fully preached the gospel of Christ*; desiring to know nothing amongst them, but Christ and him crucified.

VERSES 20. 21. *Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was*

named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard, shall understand.

THAT the thing he spoke last, touching the far spreading of the gospel, might be clearer, he obviateth an objection here. It might have been said, Your travelling through all these countries from Jerusalem unto Illyricum, and preaching the gospel, is not much, seeing the most of the difficulty of the work might be over ere you came there; the people might have been converted before you saw them. He answereth: That was not my way of preaching the gospel, for I earnestly desired and endeavoured to preach the gospel in places which never heard of it before, and *not where Christ was once named*; and why so? *lest I should build upon another man's foundation*, and so carry myself as if I had not been an apostle, whose work it was to lay the foundation of the gospel churches, and to found and settle churches where there was none before, and thereby seem to rob others of their glory. Next, he sheweth how consonant this was unto the prophecies that went before of Christ's kingdom; and for this cause citeth a passage out of Isa. lii. 15. where it is foretold what shall be the fruits of Christ's exaltation, *viz. That that which had not been told them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider*: And this passage the apostle citeth, to shew how this prophecy was partly fulfilled by his preaching, and how he had an eye to these promises and prophecies.

From verse 20. OBSERVE,

I. As the Lord endued these officers who were called apostles, with extraordinary gifts and endowments; so he set them upon a very hard task, and gave them commission, next and immediately under him-

himself, to plant the gospel, and to lay the foundation of gospel churches, and to erect the christian model of church government: It was their part to lay the foundation, and to be wise master-builders; Paul did so here, and so did others lay the foundation of churches; *Yea, so did I strive to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, &c.* See 1 Cor. iii. 10. 11. Eph. ii. 20.

II. The apostles, neither one nor other of them, were in their own persons the foundation of the church, (as Papists fondly imagine Peter to be, Matth. xvi. 18.) but all the foundation which they laid, was preaching the truth of the gospel where it was not heard of before; and so they but laid Christ, who is the only foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 11. Isa. xxviii. 16. and chief corner-stone, Psalm cxvii. 22.: for what he calleth a foundation, in the end of the verse, he calleth a preaching of the gospel, in the beginning of it; *So have I striven to preach the gospel, &c. lest I should build upon another man's foundation.*

III. It is laudable and commendable in ministers of the gospel, to be so desirous of preaching the gospel, and of converting sinners, that they strive and contend with great zeal and earnestness, as with a kind of holy ambition and desire of honour, striving to outstrip others; for so did Paul: *So have I strived to preach the gospel*; the original is emphatical, signifying, to strive with ambition and holy earnestness, as being loth to be outstripped.

IV. As it is a matter of great difficulty to get a people brought under the gospel, who were living in atheism and idolatry before; so is it a matter of great honour to be blessed of God in laying the foundation of any good in a place: this made Paul thun to preach where Christ had been heard of, lest he should have robbed others of their glory and due honour, and made him strive to preach where Christ had not been heard of; *So have I strived, &c.*

From verse 21. OBSERVE,

I. The news of Christ, and of salvation thro' him, springing up in a place where there was nothing but atheism and gross ignorance before, is a fruit and effect of Christ's exaltation; and so it should be looked on, for in Isaiah this is foretold as an effect of Christ's exaltation, *To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see.*

II. It may be a great encouragement for the ministers of the gospel to undertake the preaching thereof, even in a place where he was never heard tell of before, when they consider how it was foretold of old, and promised as a sweet fruit of Christ's exaltation, that such should see and understand much of Christ, who never heard of him before; and it may be great joy and peace to a faithful servant of Christ's, when he seeth how the fruits and effects of his pains in the ministry are conform unto old promises, and his carriage is consonant unto old prophecies; thus doth Paul make use of that passage out of Isaiah, saying, *As it is written.*

III. Where the gospel cometh forth with power and the manifestation of the Spirit, there people obtain new discoveries; they see themselves otherways than ever they did before, and they get brave and excellent discoveries of noble Jesus; he is laid open to their view: The gospel discovereth and unfoldeth the beauty of this excellent Redeemer; *To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard, shall understand.*

VERSES 22. 23. 24. *For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.*

But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

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THE next thing he speaks of in this conclusion is anent his coming to see them: And, 1st, He gives the reason why he has not come to them as yet, verse 22. *For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you*; which hath reference to the preceding purpose, where he sheweth how busy he was in the eastern parts, preaching and planting churches thro' Syria, Asia, and Greece. 2^{dly}, He lays down some grounds of hope that he will now see them; as, 1. *Now having no more place in these parts*; now having no more churches here to plant, and to bring in to the gospel. 2. *And having a great desire these many years to see you*; I no sooner heard of your faith in Christ, but I as soon desired to come to you; and so these many years I have been still desirous to make a visit. And, 3. I have a purpose to come to the west parts, and to take a journey even towards Spain, and then I will see you as I pass by. 4. When, thro' the Lord's assistance, I take my journey towards these west parts, I hope God shall so dispose, as that I shall see you, and that I shall also get a convoy or a guide of you in my way; but I resolve not to make only a short stay and away, but to stay sometime with you, and to be filled and refreshed with your company.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Men may project and propose many things, but the supreme Governor of heaven and earth disposeth as he thinketh fit: Paul was thus hindered from going to Rome; *for which cause also I have been much hindered from coming unto you*.

II. Gracious souls should and will dispense with the want of their company and fellowship whom they heartily desire, when the kingdom and interest of Christ is a gainer thereby; they will dispense with their own private, when the public interest of Jesus is upon the advancing hand: This he giveth as a ground to quiet and satisfy the Romans anent his not coming

to them, that the planting and settling of churches in the eastern parts so took him up, that he could not win to see them; *for which cause also*, says he; that is, for being taken up with filling the net of the gospel with the regions and cities betwixt Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, *I have been much hindered from coming unto you*.

III. The main ground of a gracious servant of Christ his desiring to transport and sit from one place to another, is, the good of the gospel, and the further spreading of the gospel of Christ, when he seeth he can, in all probability, advance the interest of Christ more in another place: That which made Paul desirous to leave the East, and come to the West, was, because *there was no more place for him in those parts*, and his coming westward would further the gospel more.

IV. A gracious and honest-hearted minister of the gospel, will have a great love to, and a strong desire after, the communion of the saints; great delight and complacency will he have to converse among them, and earnestly will he seek to be comforting, refreshing and strengthening them; thus was it with Paul here: *And having a great desire these many years to see you*.

V. The longing desire that is among saints, after the fellowship and company of one another, as it is not carnal, but upon a spiritual account; so it is not vain, light and superficial, but serious, fixed and abiding: *I have a desire these many years to come unto you*,

VI. The end and scope of all the labours, travels and journeys of the faithful servants of Christ, is not vain glory, curiosity, self-interest; but altogether the good of the gospel, the promoting of the interest of Jesus Christ: This was Paul's end which moved him to resolve upon a journey into Spain; *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain*.

VII. Faithful servants of Christ may be shoot-

shooting far, and projecting and intending noble exploits and acts, for the furtherance of the kingdom of Christ, and yet God think fit to take the purpose off their hand instead of the performance, and so dispose of things in his wise providence, as the work intended shall be left to other hands to accomplish: Paul, we see here, intended a journey to Spain, for planting and settling the gospel there, and yet for any thing we find on record in scripture, he never came to Spain, yea, much we find that says he never came thither; for at his first coming to Rome he was a prisoner, and after his release he went eastward, for so he promised in his epistles written from Rome, as Phil. ii. 24. and Philem. 23. and at his next coming to Rome he was apprehended by Nero, and martyred.

VIII. God's extraordinary manifestations of himself and his mind, at some times, as to some pieces of our ordinary employment, giving us full clearness and persuasion thereunto, should not be always expected of us, and so made the ground of our walk, as that we will attempt nothing without the same; the Lord letting out these communications as he thinketh fit, at some great exigence and nick of difficulty: for here we see the apostle resolving often to come to Rome, and now professing to go to Spain, without any immediate impulse, though some times, as Acts xvi. 6. 9. 10. his course was directed by such a compass.

IX. In all our undertakings, resolutions, and journeys, we should always have an eye unto the supreme, over-ruling, and all-disposing hand of Providence, with dependence thereupon, and submission thereunto, even though our purposes be thereby crossed; therefore says Paul, *I trust to see you in my journey.* See Jam. iv. 13.

14. 15.

X. It is the duty of Christians to be gentle, courteous, and civil to all, but especially to the servants of God; Paul *trusteth to be brought on his way by them,*

and that not out of any vain glory, as desiring pomp and worldly magnificence in such attendance, but as a token of love and respect to him.

XI. Christians visits and conference should not be for putting off of time, or for some fruitless exercise, but for spiritual edification and special advantage, and should be so improven; so desirous should they be to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: *If first I be filled with your presence;* there is the use Paul would make and intend of his visit, even to be much refreshed with their company, and with seeing the grace of God shining among them.

XII. It is much satisfaction and contentment unto a gracious minister, to see the grace of God shining among a people; it is a filling, satisfying, and an upmaking sight to see the work of God thriving among a people; a gracious minister will count himself made up when he sees this, tho' he has many other wants: The apostle speaketh of being *filled with their company,* or with them.

VERSES 25. 26. 27. *But now I go unto Jerusalem, to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia, and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.*

It hath pleased them verily, and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

BEcause the Romans might have said, Seeing there is no place for his stay in Macedonia or Greece, why doth he not come immediately unto us, since he hath such a love and desire to see us? therefore he sheweth the reason why he could not win to see them presently, viz. because he was upon a particular employment to go to Jerusalem, and he was al-

ready upon his journey; *But now I go unto Jerusalem.* And the occasion of his going thither is particularly set down, and that so much the rather that he would warrily and prudently put the Romans to imitate these in Macedonia and Achaia, and send some relief for the poor saints at Jerusalem; *To minister* (or being already upon the work of ministering,) *unto the poor saints at Jerusalem*; I am going to play the part of a deacon, and carry some relief unto these impoverished believers through famine and persecution, according as was condescended on, Gal. ii. 10. and the business was a contribution gathered up among the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, (remote regions from Jerusalem.) for these poor saints: Now, says he, *It hath pleased them*; they were convinced of the necessity of it, and did it of their own accord, freely and cheerfully: And this he cometh over again quietly to stir up the Romans to do something, and further says, *And their debtors they are*; it is a kind of debt which common equity calleth for, that seeing the Gentiles have been partakers of the good things of Christ and of the gospel, which was in some kind theirs, as being peculiarly promised unto them; it is their duty to be ministering to them in carnal and perishing things, to be accounting it a public and holy piece of service to be communicating of the things of a world with them; and therefore thus, while he speaketh of such grounds of the equity of this as concerned the Christians at Rome as much as these in Macedonia and Achaia, he insinuateth what is expected at their hands.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Our profession of love and kindness towards any should not be complimenting and formal, but real, christian, and serious; he professeth a great desire to them, and now to shew the reality and sincerity of his profession, he tells them the reason of his present stay from them, *Now I go unto Jerusalem.*

II. So tender and careful ought all the servants of Christ to be of the necessitous saints of God, that they should not think it below them to be expressing their tenderness and love by taking effectual courses, not only to testify love to them in that case, but also to supply their wants, and to relieve them in their straits: The apostle here was very solicitous and very diligent in pressing these of Macedonia and Achaia to send a contribution to these saints at Jerusalem, 2 Cor. ix. 3. 4. 5. and having got it up he would carry it himself to them, so desirous was he to have them relieved: *But now I go to Jerusalem, to minister unto the saints.* See Gal. ii. 10.

III. Grace, and a poor condition in the world, do oftentimes meet together; God so ordering it in his wise providence, that even such as are rich in faith should have but a poor portion in the world, James ii. 5. that they may learn better the way of faith, and close dependence on God, and may long more for the possession of that kingdom which is promised to them: *We hear of the poor saints at Jerusalem.*

IV. God's great goodness, kindness and faithfulness towards his own, even when empty handed, appeareth in that he dispenserth not so with all his people at once, but maketh some in a capacity to help and relieve others, and setteth some on work to deal with those who have, and moveth their hearts at length to give something for their supply who want; and thus, and many more ways, doth he make good his word towards them: *Tho' at this time the saints at Jerusalem were impoverished and destitute of worldly comfort, yet the Lord stirreth up Paul to mind their condition at this time, and to deal with the saints in Macedonia and Achaia, who are in a capacity to send some relief to them: It hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution.*

V. Tho' when we are in straits we be ready to question God's carefulness and mind-

mindfulneſs of us; yet, in the mean time, God may be bringing proviſion to us from afar, and poſſibly from that airth that we could not expect it from: God was here bringing ſupply even from Macedonia and Achaia to the poor ſaints at Jeruſalem.

VI. No diſtance of place will wear out that kindly ſympathy, love and tenderneſs which is in Chriſtians towards other, they being all members of one and the ſame body, endued with one and the ſame Spirit; but every true Chriſtian has a fellow-feeling, heart-affecting and warming ſympathy with other Chriſtians in their ſtraits and difficulties, live they at never ſo great a diſtance, yea, this chriſtian affection and tenderneſs vents beſt in a day of adverſity. Now the ſaints at Jeruſalem are in a diſtreſſed condition, and even theſe in Macedonia and Achaia were affected with their miſery, and ſo affected as to gather a certain contribution for them: *It hath pleaſed them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor ſaints at Jeruſalem.*

VII. Many ſuch as are dear to God may be redacted to that ſtrait, that when the wicked have more than they know well how to guide, they may be forced to live upon the charity of others, and be glad of a contribution: *To make up a certain contribution.*

VIII. As the children of God ſhould be ready, according to their ability, to diſtribute to the neceſſity of the ſaints; ſo ſhould they do it cheerfully, willingly, heartily, with all alacrity, readineſs of mind, not grudgingly: It ſhould pleaſe them well to do ſo; *It hath pleaſed them of Macedonia, &c.* See 2 Cor. viii. 12. ix. 6. 7. 8.

IX. It is the duty of miniſters to be preſſing people and ſtirring them up to charity, which will prove an evidence of profeſſed ſubjection unto the goſpel, 2 Cor. ix. 13. beſides the great advantage which will redound thereby unto the ſaints in diſtreſs: Thus doth Paul put the Romans in mind of their duty, as we ſhewed in the expoſition.

X. Miniſters ſhould uſe great prudence in wining in upon people to move them to quit with any thing in a world, tho' to the great reſreſhment of other ſaints; ſo much of the love to the world doth adhere to the beſt, that a chriſtian prudential way muſt be uſed, and not an authoritative commanding way: Thus Paul doth not ſo much as directly deſire theſe Romans to this contribution, but only hints at ſome things to put them in mind of it as their duty; *It hath pleaſed them verily, and their debtors they are, &c.* See 2 Cor. viii. 8. and ix. 3. 4. 5.

XI. Whatever ſpiritual good we receive thro' occaſion of any, it ſhould lay ſtrong obligations on us to be forthcoming, to our power, for their temporal advantage, when neceſſity urgeth, and to look upon it as a debt: Thus ſpeaks he here of the Macedonians and Achaians; and he would have the Romans looking ſo on it likewise as a debt due to the poor Jews; *for if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their ſpiritual things, their duty is to miniſter unto them in carnal things.*

VERSES 28. 29. *When therefore I have performed this, and have ſealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am ſure when I come unto you, I ſhall come in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt.*

AFTER he has thus told his errand to Jeruſalem, which was the thing that detained him from coming unto them, he ſheweth them now, that when he has diſcharged and finiſhed this piece of truſt that was put upon him, he would then come as he went to Spain, and he was perſuaded he ſhould do good when he came: When therefore I have performed this committed to me, *and have ſealed to them this fruit;* that is, have faithfully diſcharged my duty, and delivered this contribution wherewith I am entrusted, as if it had been ſealed up in bags; even this contribution, which is

a sweet-smelling fruit of the grace of God in the givers, and of the sincerity of their christian affection towards the necessitous; then, says he, *I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ*; that is, I am confident my God shall come with me, and let me see some sweet fruit of my coming among you; the blessings that accompany the gospel of Christ shall abound amongst you; the preaching of the gospel shall be wonderfully blessed amongst you.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Whatever employment we be put upon, we should endeavour faithfully to discharge and fulfil the same, especially if we be employed in and about something that may be helpful to the distressed saints of Christ: Paul would go no way till he had performed his undertaking, and sealed the gift and contribution; *When I have performed this, &c.*

II. Kind and cheerful giving out to the necessities of the saints, speaks out much of God's grace at the heart, and is a noble fruit of that brotherly affection which is in all Christians: It is a fruit that must have some stock it groweth on, and a fruit that is even advantageous to themselves: *Sealed this fruit.* See Psal. iv. 17.

III. As the gospel itself is a noble and rich blessing, speaking out much of God's wonderful love, and carrying along with it the rarest blessings imaginable, grace and glory being wrapt up in the bosom thereof; so, where it cometh in power, it worketh noble effects, and bringeth with it life, grace, and all that is desirable: There is a blessing, and a fulness of the blessing of this gospel; *I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*

IV. The gladdest news that a faithful minister can carry unto a people, is the news of the gospel; and to have the fulness of the blessing of this gospel in a place is the most desirable fruit of ministers pains and presence, and this should be the main thing which should make his presence desired and longed for. The greatest good

a minister can do, or should desire to do, in a place, is to come and be amongst them in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ: This is the best he can say to make them desire his presence, and to cheer up their heart to wait on; *And I am sure I shall come in the fulness of the gospel of Christ.*

VERSES 30. 31. 32. 33. *Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.*

That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem, may be accepted of the saints.

That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

THESE verses contain the third part of the conclusion of the epistle, viz. an exhortation to prayer to God for him: In which we have considerable, 1st His earnestness in desiring this; 1. He calls them *brethren*, a strong argument to move them to this duty. 2. *I beseech you*, says he; I request you with all earnestness. 3. *I beseech you, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake*, a pithy obtestation; I pray you, as you love the Lord Jesus, and the thriving of his work and glory. 4. *And for the love of the Spirit*; that is, if you have any sympathy and charity, which the Spirit of God worketh in his saints, and as you would express that, pray for me. 2^{dly}, The thing he is exhorting them to, is, Prayer, and this he calleth a wrestling with God in prayer with and for him; a striving and contending with earnestness and seriousness, over difficulties and impediments that Satan and a false heart maketh. 3^{dly}, He mentioneth two particulars which he would have them mainly asking; 1. that he might be kept out of the hands of wicked

wicked unbelieving Jews, who would seek his life; and, 2. that the service he was upon might be accepted of the saints; that such of the Jews who were zealous of the law, and had some prejudice at Paul for being so downright against the law, as we see Acts xxi. 21. might now take this piece of kindness well off his hand. 4thly, He pointeth at the fruit he would get by their prayers, or the advantage he expected, 1. *that I may come unto you with joy*, verse 32. when God has granted me these two; thro' your prayers, I will then have a fair opportunity to come unto you; and that with joy; but he addeth, *by the will of God*, to signify both his submission; and to teach them the same: And 2. *may with you be refreshed*; when I see your order, and the grace of God shining among you.

And finally, he closeth with a word of prayer, and taketh up God as the author of peace, and prayeth that he may be with them as reconciled thro' Christ, keeping them in peace among themselves; and in their own minds; and addeth *Amen*, the usual conclusion of prayers.

From verse 30. OBSERVE,

I. The strongest Christian is not beyond the help of the prayers of the weaker, God having so disposed, in his wonderful providence, that each may be steadable to another; for here the apostle is calling for the prayers of the Romans, *Now, I beseech you, brethren.*

II. The more of God's grace be in a soul, the more will they value that enriching trade of prayer; and the more earnest will they be to have the concurrence even of the weakest Christians in prayer. We see how serious and earnest Paul is here, obtesting them for their concurrence in prayer; *Now, I beseech you, brethren, &c.*

III. It is a most necessary and excellent thing to see Christians joining together in wrestling with God for any mercy: This is clear from Paul's so earnest pressing of this, with such solemn obtestations, *I beseech you, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.*

IV. Believers being all begotten of the same Father, and children of the same family, should heartily sympathize with one another in their straits and difficulties, and should be commoved at them, as if they were their own: When Paul would have them lending him a lift in his strait, he mindeth them of their relation, and of the brotherhood; *I beseech you, brethren.*

V. The best way that a believer can testify his sympathy and brotherly affection to his christian brethren in their straits and difficulties, is to be sending up their supplications to God for them; to be laying out their case before God, and wrestling with him as for themselves: *I beseech you, brethren, that ye strive together with me in prayer.*

VI. As all true Christians have a strong affection towards Christ, he being the only delight of their souls, and the chiefest among ten thousands unto them; so there is nothing more forcible to prevail with them for to set about any duty, than that the interest of Jesus Christ is concerned in the matter; so that their faithful and conscionable discharge of the duty, will be advantageous thereto; for the apostle makes use of this argument to stir them up to pray for him; *For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.*

VII. The thriving and ongoing of the work of the gospel, and of the kingdom of Christ, is not a little concerned in the welfare and prosperous attempts of his most faithful and eminent servants; and this should make their case and condition ly nearer the heart of believers: Paul is very earnest to have them praying for his prosperous journey, and he useth this argument, *For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.*

VIII. Whatever true and kindly love and tender affection, or bowels of compassion is in any true hearted Christian, that is allenarly the work and operation of the Spirit of God: Whatever a good nature, education, or the like, may do with some, yet this true, spiritual, and kindly love is only wrought by the Holy Spirit; and

and this same love and heavenly charity is wrought, in some measure, in all true believers: *By the love of the Spirit.*

IX. This true and kindly love, wherever it is, will prompt up the soul to a kindly sympathy with other members of the same body; it will be like the spirits keeping the blood warm thro' all the body; so that whoever are endued with this blessing and gift of God, cannot but sympathize with any saint of God in their distress; this is his other argument, *By the love of the Spirit.* See Phil. ii. 1.

X. Whoever is desirous to have others wrestling with God for them, would be careful not to neglect the same themselves; and whoever seeth any worth or usefulness in prayer, will both set about it themselves, and set others on work to it also: *Ye strive together with me.*

XI. In our prayers with and for others, we should labour to be serious and earnest, and not superficial, nor do it simply for our exoneration; and whoever taketh a kindly and heartsome lift of another's condition in prayer, will find it no easy task, but a battle, there being many things which Satan doth make use of to hinder and mar us in the duty, all which must be wrestled over with resoluteness and fervency of spirit; therefore, says he, *Strive together with me, in your prayers for me.*

From verse 31. OBSERVE,

I. The faithful and eminent servants of Christ, as they are always to expect opposition, and to resolve upon hazards in going about the work of the Lord; so even then most when they are about some special piece of service for the glory of God, and the comfort of poor believers; Satan who is always devising mischief, being then ready to mar and obstruct the work, and to lay impediments in the way: He would have them praying, that he might be *delivered from them that did not believe.*

II. As always there will be some who will not believe the gospel, so the greatest opposition that the work of God will meet

with, will be at the hands of such as refuse to subject to the gospel, even where it hath come forth in great power and efficacy: He prays that he might be delivered from such *as did not believe in Judea.*

III. Whatever danger or difficulty any be in, their best course then is to have recourse to God by prayer and supplication, who has said, *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will answer thee*, Plal. l. 15.: Paul fearing this danger, setteth to, and resolveth to set to prayer, *Wrestle together with me, that I may be delivered, &c.*

IV. Whenever any of the servants of God are in any peril and danger, thro' the faithful discharge of the duties of their calling, then should all the faithful children of God join their heads together, and send up their joint prayers and supplications to the throne of grace, and wrestle with God in their behalf, that they may be delivered out of that danger: *Wrestle together with me, that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea.*

V. Faithful servants of God will not fear at duty for any danger that is in their way, but notwithstanding of seen perils, yet they will follow the call, and yoke themselves and others to prayer, a noble and useful mean at that time, and quiet themselves thro' faith, having committed themselves and the work to God's care and protection: The apostle foresaw his danger, and yet he would proceed, only he yoketh others to prayer, and resolveth to follow that duty himself.

VI. The faithful and honest servants of God may be liable to sad misconstructions, even when they are occupied in a most commendable piece of service; for Paul even when he is carrying a large contribution to Jerusalem, is so liable to misconstructions, that he feareth he shall not have much thanks for his pains, and therefore he would have the Romans praying that *his service might be accepted.*

VII. Whatever misconstructions we be under, and how little soever our service

in any piece of employment ſhould be accounted of by men, whom poſſibly it moſt concerneth, yet conſcience of duty, and of the good of the thing itſelf, ſhould ſet us on, knowing that our rich reward is in heaven; for Paul, tho' he feared his ſervice would not be accepted of the ſaints, yet he draweth not back, but goeth on for all that.

VIII. It is ſo hard a matter to get prejudices even amongſt good folk, when rooted faſt, laid aſide, that even ſuch actions in the perſon againſt whom the prejudice is, as ſpeak our moſt of love, tendernels and affection, will hardly ſerve to root out that prejudice: Even this contribution which coſt Paul much pains ere he got it gathered, and now was carried by himſelf, to the great hazard of his life, will hardly ſuffice for rooting out of this prejudice, which even the ſaints had at Paul; for he thinks good for all this to yoke the Romans to prayer, that *his ſervice might be accepted of the ſaints.*

IX. The moſt effectual way to get prejudices amongſt the godly rooted out, is, the fervent and ſerious prayer of the faithful to God; and this ſhould be looked on as ſuch a matter calling for the prayers and wreſtlings of the ſaints to God, that it may be taken away; *And that my ſervice might be accepted of the ſaints.*

From verſe 32. OBSERVE,

I. The great advantage that Chriſtians will reap by the fellowſhip and company of the precious ſervants of God, ſhould ſtir them up to wreſtle the more earneſtly with God for a prosperous journey unto theſe ſervants of God: He ſtirreth them up to this duty of prayer, with this motive, *That I may come unto you.*

II. Not only ſhould Chriſtians be deſirous of the company and fellowſhip of the ſervants of God; but alſo they ſhould deſire to have them in a rejoicing frame, and not in heavineſs and ſorrow, that their fellowſhip may be the more comfortable: *That I may come to you with joy.*

III. It will be matter of joy and gladneſs unto a gracious and faithful ſervant of God, to have miſtakes and prejudices which the godly have at them removed and taken out of the way, and their labours and endeavours, for the glory of God, and the comfort of the poor ſaints, well accepted of: This was it which would have made him come unto them with joy; and therefore he puts them to pray that his ſervice might be accepted; *That he might come unto them with joy.*

IV. As the Lord hath a holy and overruling hand of providence, diſpoſing of every man, and of all his journeys, as he ſeeth fit, according to his everlaſting purpoſe and unchangeable will and decree; ſo it is the duty of Chriſtians to be eyeing this in all their undertakings and purpoſes, and to be ſubmitting thereto in every thing; therefore he addeth, *By the will of God.*

V. Chriſtian communion and fellowſhip, as it is a moſt refreshing thing in itſelf, ſo is it refreshing to all ſorts of Chriſtians; even the ſtrongeſt will be refreshed with the company of the meaneſt, and the meaneſt much comforted by the ſtronger: *That I may be comforted together with you.*

VI. So deſirable a thing is mutual chriſtian comfort and refreshing, that the thoughts of it ſhould ſtir up believers to be wreſtling with God for ſome ſweet opportunity for Chriſtians to meet together, and ſpeak to the encouraging and refreshing of one another: This is the other motive he ſtirrs them up to prayer for him by, *That I may be comforted together with you.*

From verſe 33. OBSERVE,

I. Tranquillity and peace of mind, with peace and concord betwixt Chriſtians, is a moſt deſirable thing, and much to be wiſhed for by the miniſters of the goſpel unto a flock; for Paul prayeth for this to the Romans, *Now, the God of peace be with you all.*

II. As Chriſtians ought to be civil towards

wards one another, so ought they to be christian and serious in their carriage, and not to be complementing, but real, in their salutations and good-nights; they ought to be hearty, sincere, and christian, wishing from the heart the best things to one another, as Paul doth teach us, when he prayeth seriously for the Romans when he is taking his leave of them; *The God of peace be with you.*

III. All the peace, calmness and tranquillity that a poor troubled soul can have, must come from God the only author thereof; he only speaks peace to a perplexed soul, and he only can make the spirits of people glew together in love and peace, and in christian concord, banishing away all discord, animosity, strife and variance; therefore is he called *the God of peace*; so is he often stiled, as we see, 2 Cor.

xiii. 13. Phil. iv. 9. 1 Theff. v. 23. 2 Theff. iii. 16. Heb. xiii. 20.

IV. A godly christian soul is of a most catholic disposition, and wisheth for the best things to all Christians, be they rich or poor, weak or strong; and the presence and influence of the God of peace, whose only work it is to create peace in souls, is necessary to all Christians of whatsoever size or quality they be; *The God of peace be with you all.*

V. In our addresses to God by prayer and supplication, we ought to come with boldness, having a clear warrant; with cheerfulness, confidence, and assurance to be heard, having a promise of acceptance to ground upon; in testimony whereof we ought to close our prayers with a hearty *amen*: So doth Paul; *The God of peace be with you all. Amen.*



CHAPTER XVI.

IN this chapter the apostle putteth an end unto this epistle, and doth these five things mainly: 1. He recommendeth to them a faithful sister, Phebe, verses 1. 2.

2. He sends salutations unto several Christians among them, with the grounds why he mentioneth them, to verse 17. 3. He directeth them how to carry themselves towards such as were given to cause divisions and raise schisms among them, to verse 21.

4. He mentioneth some who were with him, who had sent commendations unto them, to verse 24. 5. He closeth with a word of prayer.

VERSES 1. 2. *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:*

That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

HE commendeth to them this woman Phebe; and, 1st, lays out to them what she was; 1. *a sister*; by profession an

honest Christian; and sister in grace: 2. *A servant of the church which is at Cenchrea*; that is, one who had been very steadable unto that company of Christians who met together at Cenchrea, a little village and haven near to Corinth: she gave them kind entertainment, and possibly a room in her house to meet in. And, 2^{dly}, desireth, 1. *to receive her in the Lord*, and *as becometh saints*; that is, to give her a kindly and heartsome welcome, in a christian manner, for the Lord's sake, and in his name.

name, and out of love to him, and in a way approved of him: thus he would have them receive her *in the Lord*, and as *becometh saints*. 2. To *assist her in whatsoever business she had need of them*; to give her all the aid and assistance they could in any matter she had to do at Rome. Then, 3dly, he addeth a motive, *For she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also*; she hath relieved many in their straits, and hath supplied their wants; and I have found her a succourer of me.

From verse 1. OBSERVE,

I. It is a lawful and commendable practice for ministers and other eminent Christians, to be writing testimonials of commendation touching other honest Christians, and thereby to be recommending them to the christian love and care of others, as Paul doth here recommend Phebe: *I commend unto you Phebe*.

II. In our commendations and letters of testimony, we should labour to be honest and sincere, and know well what they are whom we so recommend or testify of, that they be such as indeed do deserve the testimony we give of them: Paul commendeth Phebe, but he knew what she was, *a sister*, and one who *was a servant of the church at Cenchrea*.

III. Grace is most free in its choice, making no exception of persons or sexes, so that in Christ Jesus there is no sort of person excepted, Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11. here is Phebe a woman eminent in grace, *a sister*.

IV. As grace is a most commendable thing where-ever it is; so it is a good ground of the commendation of any person, and will be ground sufficient to endear any who hath grace unto the heart-affection of a true Christian; grace will beget new and strong relations, and gracious hearts cannot but warm towards other; therefore Paul tells them, that this Phebe was *a sister in grace*.

V. When once a soul gets grace to lay hold on Christ by faith, he is taken within the family of God, and becometh a child of the house, and has a relation of a brother or sister to all the children of God, of whatsoever nation, kindred or language they be; Paul says of Phebe she is *our sister*.

VI. It is a most commendable thing for those whom God hath blessed with wealth, and other things in a world, to be helpful and steadable unto any of the children of God, and to be carrying themselves as useful and profitable servants and helpers of the church of God: It is spoken to the commendation of this woman, that she *was a servant of the church at Cenchrea*; one who had afforded them accommodation and other necessities, and so had been very steadable unto them.

VII. The apostles did not only plant and settle churches in large and populous cities, but they also spread the gospel, and gathered churches in country villages; here is *a church at Cenchrea*, a little village near to Corinth, and a sea-port.

VIII. As the apostles ordered all things so as might most tend to edification, so did they constitute churches, of such and such numbers as might most conveniently meet together for worship and government; and we read not of any diocesan churches instituted then: Here is a church meeting at Cenchrea, which was no metropolis; so we read of churches in such and such cities, as Jerusalem, Acts viii. 1. and xi. 22. Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 2. 2 Cor. i. 1. Antioch, Acts xiii. 1. and these mentioned, Rev. ii. and iii.

From verse 2. OBSERVE,

I. It is the duty of Christians to be warm, tender, kindly, and affectionate one to another; to welcome, embrace and take one another into their bosoms, with strong affection, and real heart-warmness and kindness: *Receive her*.

II. Christians in their expressions of kindness and love to one another, should

be as Christians walking upon christian grounds, driving at christian ends, and moved by christian motives and considerations: He bids *receive her in the Lord*; that is, receive her as a real Christian for the Lord's sake, and out of love to Christ, and so upon a spiritual account.

III. Christians should be often minding the obligation that Christianity layeth upon them, that they may thereby be stirred up to a conscionable discharge of their duty, the forgetting whereof occasioneth much short-coming; therefore he addeth *as becometh saints*.

IV. Christian kindness should not be verbal and complementing, but real, and should kyth in real deeds and proofs of real affection; and each Christian ought, to the uttermost of his power, to be helpful and steadable to others; *That ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you*.

V. It is much to the commendation of a Christian, to be helpful and any way steadable unto other Christians; and such kindness shown to the saints should not be forgotten, but should endear such bountiful Christians unto the affections of all other Christians: Paul will not forget the kindness of Phebe, and he would have the Romans tender and loving towards her for that cause; *for she hath been a succourer of many*.

VI. Kindness shown to any faithful and eminent servant of God, as it ought not to be forgotten thro' base ingratitude; so God will make it meet such kind of favourers another day, and that more ways than one. This kindness shown by Phebe unto Paul and others, is here recorded of her, and has fruit redounding to her, even from the Romans; *Receive her, &c. for she hath been a succourer of myself also*.

VERSES 3. 4. *Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:*

(Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.)

NOW the apostle setteth down several eminent Christians whom he desireth to be saluted in his name, in token of his great love and respect towards them, that the Romans might have them in high account, and withal setteth down some encomiums on some of their commendable actions, the more to endear them unto the Romans, and to stir them up to walk answerable unto that commendation which Paul had given of them, and to proceed in their christian course without wearying. And first he saluteth Priscilla and her husband Aquila, Acts xviii. 2. 18. who new were returned unto Rome; and of them he says, 1. *That they were his helpers in Christ Jesus*; doing what was in their power to carry on the work of the gospel, and so lending a lift unto Paul, by instructing, in a private way, others who were ignorant of Christ, as we see they did Apollos, Acts xviii. 16. 2. *That they laid down their necks for his life*; that is, hazarded themselves to save and guard Paul when the Corinthians did oppose him, Acts xviii. 6. and constrained him to change his quarters, and lodge with one Justus; or, when that stir and emulation was before Gallio, Acts xviii. 12. And then addeth, *Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles*; such kindness ought not to be forgotten.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Christianity taketh not away civility, humanity, and gentle courteousness, but rather helpeth it forward by making it run in a clear christian channel: it is humanity and civility to be sending our respects unto our beloved friends and good-willers, and Christianity putteth a noble and heavenly dye upon this; thus Paul, in a most christian manner, has respects, in salutations, unto a number of eminent Christians, and gives open proof of the reality of his love towards, and estimation of such as had given real proof of the grace of God in them; *Salute Priscilla and Aquila*.

II. It is a brave thing to see husband and wife linked together in the bond of the gospel, and both giving up themselves unto the service of Christ in the gospel, that they may be both linked together in the estimation of the saints, as Aquila and Priscilla were here; *Salute Aquila and Priscilla.* See 2 Tim. iv. 19.

III. Even private Christians, keeping within the compass of their calling and station, may do much for the promoting of the work of God in the place where they are, by private instruction, admonition and reproof, and helping sinners in to Christ, by commending of Christ, and the way of godliness, unto others, in a christian, prudent manner: thus those two were *helpers in Christ Jesus.*

IV. The painfulness and diligence of Christians in promoting the kingdom of Christ, will not be forgotten of the Lord, and should be much thought of by other Christians, and will undoubtedly endear such unto the hearts of the faithful servants of Christ, who will be glad to see the work of God thriving in the hands of any, and will look upon all such as helpers of them, and lenders of a lift: therefore he calleth them, *my helpers in Christ Jesus.*

V. True christian love will prompt a man to hazard himself for the saving of a precious and eminent servant of Christ, and will not let him spare pains, hazard, and trouble to relieve such in their imminent danger; and the greater the difficulty be, love will break forth the more vehemently: *Priscilla and Aquila* for Paul's life, *laid down their own necks.* See 1 John iii. 16.

VI. It is not the way to lose our life to be hazarding it for Christ and his precious servants and interests, but rather a way to keep it sure, and our reward will be no less at God's hands than if we had indeed lost what we hazarded for the Lord: *Priscilla and Aquila* laid down their necks for Paul, and yet they lost not their lives, and it is here recorded by the Spirit of

God as if they had indeed lost all, when he says, *they laid down their necks.*

VII. Kindness shown to us in a strait by any, to the great endangering and hazarding of themselves, should never be forgotten, but always remembered with thankful hearts, and our hearty thankfulness thereof should be expressed at all occasions; *Unto whom I give thanks,* says Paul.

VIII. As the preservation of the life of a faithful and eminent servant of Christ, is a benefit redounding unto the good and advantage of the church of Christ, particularly of such who belong to the charge of such faithful pastors; so should it be accounted by such: And these who have been any way instrumental in this delivery, ought to be very sensible of this great favour; for all the churches of the Gentiles were bound to give thanks unto Aquila and Priscilla for their laying down their necks for Paul's sake; *But also all the churches of the Gentiles:* It was these who properly belonged to Paul's charge.

VERSES 5. 6. *Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ.*

Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

HE saluteth, *1dly*, the church which met at the house of Aquila and Priscilla; and *2dly*, Epenetus, whom he stileth his *well-beloved*, and who is the *first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ*; that is, one who believed amongst the first in Achaia, welcoming the gospel and the offer of Christ, with the family of Stephanus, 1 Cor. xvi. 15. *4thly*, Mary, a woman who had used much labour, and been at much pains and expences in providing food, rayment, and other necessities unto Paul and his companions.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' the rulers and governors of a land, should give but small encouragement

unto the gospel, and should not suffer the professors thereof to meet publickly in public places for the worship of God, nor give no accommodation thereunto, yet the Lord will find out some that will straiten themselves to accommodate the church, and he will find out room one where or other: When at this time there was no public places allowed unto the church, God provides and finds room for his faithful friends and followers in a private house; there was a church at the house of Priscilla and Aquila: *And the church at their house.*

II. Gracious souls will be loving to do good unto the cause of Christ, and helping forward his interest all they can, be they where they will, and the kindness which is shown unto the poor church of Christ in a time when she hath few friends, will be kept on record before the Lord: It is here recorded that there was a church at the house of Aquila and Priscilla, and that not only now when they were dwelling at Rome, but also when elsewhere, as we see, 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

III. Tho' we be bound to love all that smell of grace, and of Christ, intirely; yet there are some whom for more real intimateness and familiarity, for more eminency in grace, and expression of bounty and goodwill towards us, we may love more than others, and carry more intimate affection unto; so Paul calleth *Epenetus his well-beloved.*

IV. However carnal men think little of the estimation and love of the faithful servants of Christ; yet it is a real ground of commendation for any to be much in the affection of such, and such should be most respected by others: The commendation he giveth of Epenetus is, that he was *his well-beloved.*

V. The very time of a soul's conversion unto God, and of their embracing of the gospel, is taken notice of by God, and will be on record by him: It is noted here, that *Epenetus was the first fruits of Achaia.*

VI. Tho' it be only God's grace that makes sinners turn to God, yet it is not a little to the commendation of such as are first in starting to the gate and breaking the ice unto the rest, in welcoming the gospel of Christ over the belly of many difficulties that usually attend the first breaking up of the gospel in a place; and such as early embrace the offers of a Mediator, should have a high room in the estimation of the faithful servants and followers of Christ: it is said to the commendation of Epenetus that *he was the first fruits of Achaia.*

VII. However the Lord, who is blessed in himself for ever, is nothing made up by the income of sinners: yet he accounts the gaining of sinners an increase unto him, it being the enlarging of his kingdom, and tending to the glory and honour of his name; the conversion of this Epenetus is called *a first-fruit.*

VIII. Where God beginneth to do good unto sinners, and wins their hearts, it is usually a great proof of a further increase there, and that God has a mind to do some more good there ere he go; the conversion of Epenetus is *a first-fruit*; and this says there was more coming.

IX. As women use to be most tender-hearted, and most compassionate towards the saints, when God taketh them by the heart; so the faithful and eminent servants of Christ may be at that strait pass, as to stand in need of the help and supply even of women: *Salute Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.*

X. The Lord taketh notice of the very manner of the saints expressing their kindness and affection towards the necessitous saints, and of every degree of their kindness, be it less or more; it is said of Mary, she *bestowed much labour* on him, and for this cause, he would have her much thought of by the Romans.

VERSE 7. *Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are*

of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

IN the 5th place, he saluteth Andronicus and Junia, upon a fourfold account; 1. That they were his kinsfolks: 2. His fellow-prisoners, when he was imprisoned for the cause of Christ at Philippi, Acts xvi. or elsewhere; 3. They are of note among the apostles; that is, much accounted of, and very highly esteemed, by the apostles; and, 4. They were in Christ before him; they were converted to the gospel of Christ, and by faith united to him, before himself.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. True Christianity banisheth not away all natural affection, but rather strengtheneth and purgeth the same; Paul forgetteth not his natural acquaintances and kinsfolk, in his salutations: *Salute Andronicus and Junius my kinsmen.*

II. As all the followers of Christ must resolve to quit their liberty for the cause of Christ, and to be cast into prisons, like dogs put into a kennel; so whosoever endureth any thing of this kind, for a testimony unto the truth, should be highly esteemed of by one and other. This *Andronicus* and *Junia* were prisoners for the truth, and now Paul will not pass them by, but will have them accounted of by the Romans: *And fellow-prisoners.*

III. It is much to the commendation of Christians, that they are much thought of by the eminent servants of Christ, altho' all the world else should have sinister thoughts of them (as usually it cometh to pass;) it is said of *Andronicus* and *Junia* that *they are of note among the apostles*; and therefore he saluteth them.

IV. The sooner any have closed a bargain with Christ, and turned their backs upon the world, and the vanities thereof, the greater matter of commendation is it for them: *They were in Christ before me.*

V. True Christians have a near and

close conjunction with Christ, not only by profession, but also by a true and lively faith, uniting them unto Christ, in a most close, real and spiritual manner, as to their Head, Husband and Root; these Christians are said to be *in Christ*.

VI. True grace, where-ever it is, will prompt a man to commend grace, where-ever it is, and not stick to do it in such a manner as may serve to abase themselves, if it may tend to God's glory; thus gracious Paul spares not to tell, that *Andronicus* and *Junia* were in Christ before himself: *Who also were in Christ before me.*

VII. However men of this world delight in vain and empty titles and stiles, yet the titles that serve to hold forth the true and divine honour of Christians, are of a far other nature, and taken from what the men of this world would account baseness, such as their prison-houses and suffering condition, and their believing in Christ, and starting soon to the way of believing; upon such accounts as these he commendeth *Andronicus* and *Junia*.

VERSES 8. 9. 10. 11. *Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.*

Salute Urbane our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Salute Apelles approved in Christ: Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.

Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

HE proceedeth in his salutations, and, 6thly, saluteth Amplias, who was beloved of him, with a true christian love; 7thly, Urbane, who was a helper in the work of the gospel; 8thly, Stachys, sincerely loved by Paul; 9thly, Apelles, who was a real Christian, and approved of Christ; 10thly, the household of Aristobulus; 11thly, Herodion his kinsman; and, 12thly, those who were of the household of Narcissus, who were real christian professors.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Our love towards Christians, ought to run in a christian channel, and should be truly christian, flowing from grace, and from love to Christ, and so, running out towards such as favour of grace and look like Christ, in carrying his image of holiness upon them; thus *Amplias is his beloved in the Lord.*

II. The help and concurrence that any give for the carrying on of the work of the gospel, and the interest of the kingdom of Christ, should endear them to the hearts of all the truly godly; and it is no little title of honour (whatever the world think of it) to be stiled one who is a helper in Christ's work: Urbane is thus honoured with the stile of being *a helper in Christ.*

III. The intimate familiarity and christian friendship that is among Christians, should not be forgotten; and the more intimate any be with the precious and eminent servants of Christ, the more should they be accounted of with other Christians: *Stachys is called his beloved.*

IV. It is a noble and high commendation to be a sincere and honest-hearted Christian, and one who hath Christ's approbation and testimony, and is known and an approved friend to Christ and his cause: *Apellas is approved in Christ.*

V. Grace is most free in its choice, and most powerful where it cometh to overcome strong impediments: grace can pass over the master of a family, and take the servants and others by the heart, and can draw the household in to Christ, tho' they have no encouragement, but rather much discouragement, from the head of the family: there is here some good Christians in the household of Aristobulus, tho' we hear no word of himself: *Salute them of Aristobulus' household;* and there are some good Christians in the house of Narcissus, who was a rich, carnal wretch, and no friend to Christianity.

VI. Christian acquaintance, love and familiarity goeth much by grace; the grace

putteth not away humanity and natural affection, yet christian love can pick out true Christians from others, and express itself towards them: Tho' he will not forget his kinsman *Herodion;* yet he can pick out such of the household of *Narcissus* as were in the Lord; and misken the rest: *Greet them which be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.*

VERSES 12. 13. 14. 15. *Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.*

Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

HE saluteth in the 13th place, Tryphena and Tryphosa, women, who laboured in the Lord, who were useful and steadable to the followers of Christ; 14thly, Persis, a more eminent woman, and so called one beloved, and one who laboured much in the Lord; 15thly, Rufus chosen in the Lord, one whom God hath chosen and signally endued; 16thly, and his mother, who was also a loving, tender hearted woman unto Paul, and as his mother; 17thly, He nameth other five together; Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, and Hermes; 18thly, He saluteth the brethren which are with them, in their households or company; 19thly, He saluteth another company of inferior Christians, whom yet he would not forget altogether, such as Philologus, Julia (it may be his wife,) Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas; 20thly, He saluteth the saints that are with them, in their company and fellowship.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. The kindness shown unto the messengers

gers of the gospel, and to the professors thereof, when done out of christian love and affection, will be taken as service for the Lord Jesus's interest, and accounted a labouring in the Lord's work, and such should be highly accounted of: *Tryphena and Tryphosa* are said thus to labour in the Lord, and therefore saluted.

II. The more eminent any are, in doing good unto the church of God, the higher room should they have in the estimation of the godly, and the more highly should they be commended; *And Rufus* is called *beloved*, and one *who laboured much in the Lord*.

III. God's making choice of any as his, and enduing them with singular gifts, graces and endowments, whereby their profession is adorned, should singularly commend them unto the christian affection of true believers: *Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord*.

IV. Tho' grace be no heirship, nor tied to any lineal descent; yet it seemeth good in the Lord's eyes, to separate for himself both mother and son sometimes, 2 Tim. i. 5. which is an excellent thing to see; *And his mother*, a gracious woman doubtless.

V. The kindly, tender and loving disposition of any, to the eminent servants of Christ, as it should not be forgotten, so it should provoke other Christians to have high and honourable thoughts of such: *His mother and mine*.

VI. True grace will not misken the meanest Christians, but will have a high estimation of them, tho' they be not of the eminentest sort: Thus Paul reckoneth up a number together, whom he only nameth and saluteth: *Asyncretus, Phlegon, &c.*

VII. Tho' it be no small piece of honour to be received publicly, as a Christian; yet that piece of honour is not to be doted on, but felks should go to heaven with great contentment, tho' in obscurity, and without any notable observation; for here there is a number of brethren and

saints, whom the apostle thinks not fit to name, save under these generals of *brethren* and *saints*.

VIII. It is more than probable, that seeing Paul, in all this catalogue of persons whom he here saluteth, maketh no mention of Peter, that Peter was not there at this time; and so it cannot be true which Papists say, viz. that Peter was bishop at Rome twenty-five years before his martyrdom.

VERSE 16. *Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.*

IN fine, he exhorteth them to reality of love among themselves: Their civil manner of saluting one another was with a kiss; now, he would not have them formal or complementing in this, but real, holy and christian; the thing that he enjoineth, is not the custom, but the holy and christian use of the custom: *Salute one another with an holy kiss*. See the like, 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 26. 1 Pet. v. 14.

In the next place, he saluteth them in the name of others; and here is one word in the general, *The churches of Christ*, in those bounds of Macedonia and Achaia, *salute you*.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. It is a heartsome and desirable sight, to see brethren dwelling together in unity, peace and love, and therefore should be earnestly studied by all, and pressed by the servants of Christ, as that which will further the work of the gospel among them; thus he exhorteth them, in the end of this epistle, to *salute one another with an holy kiss*. See the places cited in the explanation.

II. The usual customs of expressing our mutual love and respect to one another, should not be used by us in a flattering manner, as was used by Absalom; nor in a dissembling manner, as was Joab's; nor in

a treacherous manner, as was Judas; nor in an impudent, unchaste manner, as the whores manner is, Prov. vii. but christian, holy, sincere, really expressing the inward affection of the heart: *Salute one another with an holy kiss.*

III. Sweet harmony, unity and mutual expressions of kindness and familiarity ought to be amongst the several churches of Christ, wishing one another well, and expressing their affections to one another, as occasion is offered: *The churches of Christ salute you.*

VERSE 17. *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.*

IN the third place, there is a very necessary duty which he would not have them forget; and therefore he casts it in here, that it might be the more noticed, and presseth it on them very seriously, with *I beseech you, brethren*, speaking to them all, both officers and others, because the duty in some respect concerned all the members of that constituted church. Now the duty thus pressed is, *mark*; that is, to observe diligently, to scout out as men on a watch tower: *Them that cause divisions*; that is, such as cause rents and schisms in the church: *and offences*; scandalous livers, and scandalous teachers, as heretics, and the like: *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*; such as teach and walk, carrying themselves as heretics and false teachers, contrary to the true doctrine which had been taught them: *and avoid them*; that is, after such incorrigible persons are legally convicted, let the officers of the church draw forth the sword of excommunication against them, and pronounce them unclean, and such as should be shunned, and then let all the rest of the church withdraw themselves from keeping any Christian fellowship or familiarity with them.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. In the church of God there will be always some persons of pernicious principles and practices, working woe and destruction to the poor church of Christ, by broaching false and damnable doctrine, and causing rents, schisms and divisions, by leading factions, sects and parties: the apostle knew there would be in this church *such as cause divisions and offences*; and such were in the churches of Galatia and Thessalonica, and others.

II. Divisions and schisms in a church are scandalous and offensive in themselves, being matter of stumbling unto many, and the occasion of much evil unto a poor church; so ordinarily such as make rents and divisions in a church, and by false doctrine corrupt and lead away the minds of men, are left of God, and walk scandalously otherways, piety not being consistent with dividing principles; these go together, *cause divisions and offences*.

III. It is no new thing to see such pernicious and pestilent persons in a church, who are driving on corrupt designs, renting a poor church, putting on a fair vizard, and colouring their actions with specious pretexts, that they may hide their poison, and carry on their designs more securely; for such must be *sought out*, narrowly marked, and their ways sifted and sifted over again, that the hidden treachery may be made to appear: *Mark such*.

IV. The more that such dangerous and corrupt persons in a church labour to carry on their purposes and designs under-board, coveredly, and in a clandestine hid manner, the more accurately and searchingly should their ways be examined, sifted and tried by the judicatories of the church, and such as are set upon the watch-tower to descry and discover adversaries and all their motions: *Mark such as cause divisions*.

V. There is great necessity lying upon all interested, to discover such deadly adversaries to the church of Christ; and the watchmen especially should use all diligence,

gence, as they love the welfare and standing of the church of Christ, to discover the motions of such, and the perniciousness of their practices, and so to discover them, as that the church may be kept from skaith, and may be guarded against their wiles: Paul beseecheth them to mark such; he knew the great necessity of it, and therefore presseth them to it the more earnestly; *I beseech you, brethren, mark such.*

VI. When a church has once drunk in the sincere milk of the word, and have laid a sure foundation of solid truth, and received the doctrine of truth, they should, by all means, labour to stand to these principles, and not be shaken with every wind of temptation of contrary doctrine, and make that a standard, by which to try all new doctrine; and they ought to reject whatsoever is contrary thereunto: therefore says he, *Contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.*

VII. Separation from an erroneous and idolatrous church, where staying still will necessarily entangle in sin, is not here condemned; but a separation or schism made in a church, where the true foundation of christian doctrine is laid and maintained: *Contrary to the doctrine which ye have received.*

VIII. There is such a censure to be used in the church, as is the sentence of excommunication against offenders, whose offences and carriage are dangerous to the church of God; the church officers ought to denounce this sentence against contumacious and incorrigible, dangerous offenders within the church, and avoid them; this must suppose a sentence of the church going before, according to Christ's rule, Matth. xviii. 17. *If he hear not the church,* then is he to be accounted as a *heathen man, and a publican.* See 1 Cor. v. 5. with 2 Cor. ii. 6. 2 Theff. ii. 14. Paul is here speaking to a constituted church, and he will not lay down a way of confusion and division, (especially when speaking so much against these evils;) by allowing each man, at his

own hand, to withdraw from all such in the church, whom he supposeth to be teachers of error; and therefore, he clearly supposeth, that the offender must be first convicted, found guilty, and condemned, before the particular members of the church forbear christian communion with him, for making him ashamed.

IX. The sentence of excommunication ought to be drawn forth, as against such who are guilty of atrocious crimes, especially if impenitent, 1 Cor. v. so against such who broatch false doctrine, to the hurt of the church, and cause sad rents and schisms in the church, to the distracting and undoing thereof: *Such as cause divisions and offences,* should be thus avoided.

X. As this executing of the censure of excommunication, is a mean appointed of Christ, for the reclaiming and gaining of the offending person, 1 Cor. v. 5. so, for the preserving of the church of Christ in unity and purity, and keeping out of wolves, that seek the ruin thereof; He would have such as cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, cut off and avoided, and thereby the church kepted in unity among themselves, and in purity of doctrine.

XI. When once the sentence of excommunication is pronounced against a contumacious offender, by the judicatures of the church, it is then the duty of all the particular members of the church, as they tender the safety of the church, the good of their own souls, and the salvation of the offending brother, to shun all church-fellowship with such, and to forbear familiar conversing and correspondence with them; *And avoid them.* See 2 John 10.

VERSE 18. *For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

IN these three verses following, the apostle presseth the former exhortation

from arguments taken, 1st, From the nature of these schismatics, verse 18. 2^{dly}, From themselves, verse 19. 3^{dly}, From God, verse 20. The arguments taken from the scandalous schismatics, are so many characters of these corrupt persons; as, 1. *They serve not the Lord Jesus*; they are not driving on his interest, as Head and King of his church; nor contributing their best endeavours for the promoting of his cause. 2. *But their own bellies*; they are seeking nothing, but to have their ambitious, voluptuous and sensual desires fulfilled, as these, Tit. i. 11. Phil. iii. 18. supposing that gain is godliness, 1 Tim. vi. 5. 3. They meddle only with *the simple*, who are ready to believe every thing, Prov. xvii. 15. such as are weak in judgment, not wise as serpents, to guard against such wiles; as these mentioned, 1 Tim. iii. 6. such as suspect no evil, it is such they prey upon. 4. They *deceive such*; using uncouth wiles to ensnare silly people in their ways; they offer fair, but underhand deceive, as a thief offereth to guide a man, and then cutteth his throat; thus it is used of seducers, 2 Thess. ii. 3. and of a man's hoodwinking of himself, 1 Cor. iii. 18. of sin, Rom. vii. 11. and of Satan, 2 Cor. xi. 3. 5. They follow forth this deceiving trade of theirs, *by good words and fair speeches*; they speak as if they were intending nothing but the good of these simple ones; yea, and more intending that than their own advantage, when there is no such matter; and they use *fair speeches*, flattering discourses, soothing up folk in their wickedness, and their good wishes and prayers, and thereby deceive the simple, applying themselves unto their humours.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Tho' schismatics and seducing persons have many fair pretexes of advancing the kingdom and interest of Christ, yet really they are doing what they can, to destroy the interest of Christ, and to hinder the thriving and welfare of his kingdom, and

are very unsteadable unto our Lord Jesus: *They serve not the Lord Jesus.*

II. So tender ought all Christ's servants to be of the precious interests of noble Christ, that none who are driving on any design derogatory to the same, should be countenanced, but stigmatized and exposed to open shame: this is his argument whereby he presseth them to withdraw from causers of sedition, &c. *They serve not the Lord Jesus.*

III. Base, carnal and beastly are the ends of false teachers and renters of a church, whatever they pretend; the love of this world prompteth them up, and the love to their back and their belly setteth them on work, and is the oil that maketh their wheels to run; this is their God, say what they will, Phil. iii. 19. *They serve their own belly.*

IV. This base self-seeking, and self-pleasing, in the enemies of truth, should make their courses to be abhorred of all the godly, and stir up the church of Christ to set some mark of shame and disgrace on such: his next motive is, *They serve their own bellies.*

V. Tho' false teachers pretend great love and affection to such as they would draw their way, yet their upshot is cruel, for they drive at nothing less than the seduction of poor souls; and this should make the church of Christ more careful, to mark and avoid such, that the poor church of Christ may be preserved safe: his next argument is this, *They deceive the simple*

VI. False teachers and seducers use not to come forth unmasked, and without a vail of fair, plausible, sweet-like, enticing, seemingly holy, and insinuating speeches; they appear not usually in their own colours, but in sheep-skins, that they may the more easily carry on their designs, and therefore they ought the more carefully to be noticed and observed. They use *good words and fair speeches*, and can speak lies in hypocrisy, 1 Tim. iv. 2. See Eph. iv. 14.

VII. As such who are of weak understanding,

ſtanding, ill rooted in the knowledge of Chriſt, are a prey to all falſe teachers, and ready to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, Eph. iv. 14. ſo falſe teachers and heretics, knowing their own market, fiſh moſt there, where the waters are leaſt clear; and this ſhould make the church guides watch more carefully over ſuch: *They deceive the minds of the ſimple.*

VERSES 19. 20. *For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wiſe unto that which is good, and ſimple concerning evil.*

And the God of peace ſhall bruife Satan under your feet ſhortly. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you. Amen.

THE ſecond ſort of arguments are drawn from themſelves, *Your obedience is come abroad*, &c. you are known to be very willing to welcome any exhortations, and this is matter of rejoicing unto me; you are known to be followers of the truth, and therefore you would do well to continue, and to learn to ſpy out theſe falſe teachers, and to diſcover their tricks: *Wiſe concerning that which is good, and ſimple concerning evil*; not ſo ready to run wrong and to be entized with ſeducers. The laſt argument is from God, who, he ſays, *ſhall ſhortly bruife Satan under their feet*; this is a promiſe of victory at length; the author of peace ſhall tread under the deſigns of that enemy of peace, and cruſh them all. Then he addeth his uſual doxology, wiſhing the grace and favour of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto them.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. As it is a commendable thing to ſee a people prompt and ready to drink in the truths of God, and to lay down their necks unto the yoke of Chriſt; ſo their engaging once in this way, and ſetting fairly out, ſhould move them to continue in that courſe of obedience; and particularly, to

ſhun ſuch as are falſe teachers, ready to lead them wrong: This argument he uſeth with them, *Your obedience is come abroad unto all men.*

II. The forwardneſs and zeal of people to welcome the truths, and walk in obedience to God's commands, ſo as their report becometh ſavoury, ſhould be matter of joy and gladneſs unto the ſervants of Chriſt: *I am glad therefore on your behalf.*

III. Even eminent Chriſtians for piety and obedience, have need to be put in mind of, and ſtirred up to, their duty, eſpecially to be upon their guard, and to watch againſt ſeducers; for even ſuch are in hazard to be blown off their feet by the ſubtilty of cunning deceivers: Even theſe whole *obedience was come abroad unto all men*, have need to be warned to be *wiſe concerning what is good.*

IV. Much ſpiritual wiſdom and heavenly underſtanding is requiſite in Chriſtians, who would keep themſelves ſafe in a day of temptations, and ſtreight in a day when falſe teachers and ſeducers are let looſe; and in church officers who ſhould diſcover ſuch crafty ſeducers, and bring their tricks and ſubtilties to light: *I would have you wiſe concerning that which is good*, &c. See Matth. x. 16.

V. Tho' true chriſtian underſtanding will make a man wiſe and ſharp-ſighted to guard againſt the wiles and ſnares of Satan; yet it will make a man ſimple as to the learning and practiſing of any crooked courſe and ſiniſtrous way for the driving on of any corrupt end and ſinful deſign: grace will make a man honeſt, ſimple-hearted, and ſincere, without guile and hypocrify: *And ſimple concerning evil.*

VI. As hope of victory may encourage all the faithful ſervants and followers of Chriſt to undertake reſolutely and courageouſly for him and his cauſe; ſo all ſuch as are contending againſt the adverſaries of Chriſt and his truth, may certainly expect to come off the field with credit; the cauſe they act for ſhall be victorious:

To encourage them, he tells them, that *the God of peace shall bruise Satan under their feet shortly.*

VII. It is good for the ministers of Christ to be proposing grounds of encouragement for the heartening of people to set about duties wherein they are like to meet with much difficulty on all hands, as here in opposing, discovering, and excommunicating of heretics and schismatics; and therefore he encourage them with this, *The God of peace shall bruise Satan, &c.*

VIII. Seducers, and such as cause divisions and schisms in the church of Christ, however they may imagine they are doing God good service, as when they are killing his servants, John xvi. 1. yet really they are prompted by Satan, instigated and stirred up by him, and are carrying on his design and purpose, which still was to trouble and molest the poor church of Christ; therefore he tells them, that *Satan's head, the ringleader of such, shall be bruised.*

IX. However wicked men and seducers may be (as in all ages they have been) molesting, marring the beauty, and interrupting the peace and tranquillity of his church, and keeping it in continual hot-water; yet they shall not prevail; the church shall be victorious, and they and all their plots confounded at length: *God shall bruise Satan under your feet.*

X. All the victories that the church getteth over her enemies is wrought by him who loveth and commendeth peace, as the only author thereof: and whenever the church is rent and divided by the cunning craftiness of seducing spirits, the God of the church, who is the author of peace, should be looked to, and earnestly called upon to still the roaring waves of trouble and divisions: *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*

XI. However the children of God, when wrestling against trouble, and the molestation caused by adversaries, think the time they remain in that condition long, yet in end it will prove but short,

and all the troubles of the church of God will soon be at an end, and the time of the trouble will seem but very short and momentary, when eternity shall dawn; *he shall tread Satan under your feet shortly:* Then shall the church get the upperhand, and her feet upon the neck of all her adversaries, and of Satan their chieftain.

From his usual farewell-with OBSERVE,

I. Ministers should be praying and wishing for the best things unto their people, and that not in a superficial complementing way, but in reality and truth: thus Paul wisheth unto them, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*; and so doth he in the end of his epistles.

II. This grace of God is a most comprehensive thing, taking in the favour and good-will of God, with all the noble effects thereof spiritual and temporal: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

III. This favour and good-will of a reconciled God, and all the graces of his Spirit which flow therefrom, are all purchased by the merits of precious Jesus; and so it is *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

IV. Our prayers and wishes ought to be hearty, flowing from strong and real affection, and so grounded, as we may with confidence close with an *Amen*, as pointing out our strong desire, and assurance to be heard.

VERSES 21. 22. 23. 24. *Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.*

I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

IN this fourth part of the chapter there are some eminent Christians named, who

who send their salutations unto the church at Rome; as, 1. *Timothy*, of whom we hear often, and whom he stileth his *work-fellow*, tho' but a young man, *Acts* xvi. 1. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 12. 2. *Lucius*, who is either Luke his constapt companion, *Col.* iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. *Phil.* ii. 4. or that *Lucius* of Cyrene mentioned, *Acts* xiii. 1. 3. *Jason*, of whom we read, *Acts* xvii. 5. 4. *Sopater*, of whom we read, *Acts* xx. 4. and these last three he stileth his *kinsmen*; they were with him at this time, *Acts* xx. 4. *Jason* in Hebrew being *Secundus* in Latin. 5. *Tertius*, who was Paul's secretary here, and thro' his allowance setteth to his own name, and saluteth them *in the Lord*, in a christian manner. 6. *Gaius*, either he of Derbe, *Acts* xx. 4. or he of Macedonia, *Acts* xix. 29. or rather he of Corinth whom Paul baptized, 1 Cor. i. 14. This *Gaius* is called Paul's *host*, and not only so, but of the whole church; a man he was who was courteous and beneficial unto Paul and all the rest of the faithful there. 7. *Erastus the chamberlain of the city*; the treasurer, or some such officer, of whom we read, 2 Tim. iv. 20. *Acts* xix. 22. 8. *Quartus a brother* in grace. Then he addeth again his ordinary farewell-wish; as if he were loth to end with them, he takes his goodnight often.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Grace is a warming thing where ever it is, warming the hearts of believers towards others, tho' they never saw other in the face: Here is a number of good Christians whose hearts are warmed with love toward the church of Rome, and they take hold of this opportunity to make their acquaintance, by sending their salutations to them.

II. Grace will make the eminentest servant of Christ stoop low, and look kindly upon any that are helping forward the work of Christ, tho' in a far inferior degree to them, and think and speak honourably of them, and desire that others may

account much of them; for Paul stileth *Timothy*, tho' but a young man, his *work-fellow*.

III. Christianity is a notable discerning thing, and a good ornament, putting a lustre upon the most ordinary of our actions; and it is a lively thing, sending out sparks on all occasions: Thus *Tertius*, who was Paul's amanuensis or scribe, saluteth them in the Lord.

IV. Grace will not suffer Christians to turn inhumane, brutish, and unsensible of kindness, and any good done them by any, but will prompt them so much the more to testify their thankfulness upon all occasions; therefore when he speaks of *Gaius*, he addeth, *mine host*.

V. Kindness shown unto the children of God in a day of straits, is that which will renown a man, and make him famous to generations, and procure a high room in the estimation and affections of all the truly godly: *Gaius* is renowned for this, that he was an *host unto a whole church*, when they could get small outward encouragement.

VI. Tho' it be not many noble whom God chooseth, 1 Cor. i. 26. yet God hath not utterly cast off that kind of men, but can send his grace into the heart even of a great one; and the great and perplexing affairs of the earth, will not hold out grace when God sends it: Here *Erastus*, the treasurer of a great city, is taken by the heart by grace, and made an honest Christian, sending his salutations to the church; *Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you*.

VII. Grace is no enemy to civil places of trust or honour, but rather a notable mean to help such in those places to a faithful and conscientious discharge of their duty: *Erastus* is a good Christian, and still a *chamberlain of the city*.

VIII. Grace in a man, though he had no more to commend him, will be a sufficient passport, and enough to endear him unto the affections of the godly, and win their

their estimation and love: There is no more said of Quartus, but that he was a brother.

IX. The more that Christians be expressing their christian affection to one another, bowels will move more, and hearts will warm more, and kindness will kyth more, and the mutual expressions of love will be reiterated again and again: Paul when he is taking his leave of these Romans, and once beginning to express the love of his heart, he cannot forbear to renew the expressions thereof again and again. In the end of the last chapter he bade the God of peace be with them, and in this chapter, verse 20. he hath his usual farewell, and here again he hath it, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

X. Grace is a most impartial lover of grace where it is, and will cast none of such who have any true grace, be it less or more, out of its hearty wishes or prayers; the desires of a truly gracious soul will be extended to all the members of Christ's body: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

VERSES 25. 26. 27. *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.*

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.)

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

IN this last part of the chapter, and close of the epistle, there is a noble doxology or song of praise unto God, whom he taketh up under a twofold notion; 1st, as powerful, verse 25. 2^{dly}, as wise, verse 27. As powerful, to establish them in the

day of temptation, and to keep them constant and stedfast in the truth of the gospel, according to the promises thereof; and which he amplifieth, 1. by the instrumental cause, *my gospel*; the gospel which I preach as a servant of Christ. 2. From the principal cause, or the chief matter of it, *and the preaching of Jesus Christ*; that is either taken actively for Christ's preaching and proclaiming the glad tidings of the gospel; or positively, for that preaching which hath Christ for its only theme and text. 3. From the manner of publishing it: (1.) It was once *a mystery*, and *a mystery kept secret since the world began*; a mystery but darkly revealed in the Old Testament times. (2.) But now it is revealed *according to the revelation* of this mystery, and *now it is made manifest, and made known*. 4. The means by which it is made known, *by the scriptures of the prophets*; by the explaining and unfolding of the scriptures of the prophets, where this mystery lay hid. 5. The warrant by which it is published, *according to the commandment of the everlasting God*; according to his word and warrant who is the unchangeable Jehovah. 6. The extent of this publication, *to all nations*, without exception. And, 7. The end, *for the obedience of faith*; to bring people up to a willingness to believe, and to rest upon Christ. Then there is the way of his offering up of praise: 1. He says, *To him be glory*; the sum of all that we can say: 2. *Through Jesus Christ*; without whom this offer will not be accepted: 3. *For ever*; here and hereafter: And, 4. *Amen*; I heartily wish it may be so, and I am confident it will be so.

OBSERVATIONS.

I. Believers having once closed with Christ, must resolve upon storms and sore blasts; and by reason of Satan's malice, and the cruelty of such as are set on work by him, they are daily in hazard of being blown over, and have therefore reason to be

be upon their guard daily : they have need to be *eſtabliſhed*.

II. Tho' God has beſtowed much grace upon his children, whereby they may be kepted from the ſnares and temptations of Satan, yet ſo ſtrong is corruption even in the beſt, that if God ſend not freſh ſupply, and new influences to water grace, and make it lively, vigorous, and ſtrong, they will not be able to ſtand out againſt the blaſt : it is only God's ſtrength and power that can ſupport a tottering ſoul, and nothing in themſelves ; it is God who is of power to eſtabliſh them : *To him who is of power to eſtabliſh you.*

III. The ſtedfaſtneſs of believers in a time of ſharp trial and temptation, is much to be wiſhed and wreſtled for ; and God is to be much importuned for grace and power, both by miniſters and others, when ſuch as cauſe diviſions and offences are broken looſe : This doxology of his has a prayer in the boſom of it ; a prayer in it to God for their eſtabliſhment : *To him who is of power to eſtabliſh you.*

IV. As the truth of the goſpel is that which ſhould be ſtuck to on all hazards in a day of trial ; ſo in the goſpel there will be precious promiſes found of grace, for ſtrength and ſtability, conſtancy and perfeverance, which ought to be well improved, ſtudied, and laid hold on by faith, when temptations are flying abroad : *Stabliſh you according to my goſpel.*

V. As it is a great piece of honour put upon one, to be employed in carrying the glad news of ſalvation thro' a Mediator ; ſo ſhould ~~all~~ who are employed therein account themſelves honoured in being put into that office : and as the tidings of the goſpel are ſweet and moſt deſirable in themſelves, ſo ſhould the heart of the carrier of theſe news cloſe ſweetly with them, and own that goſpel as his own upon all hazards : The apoſtle is not aſhamed of the goſpel, but is warmed at the thoughts of it, and he calleth it his goſpel ; *according to my goſpel.*

VI. The goſpel treateth of nothing but of noble Jeſus, the Redeemer of ſinners, ſhewing what he has done for ſinners, and what way ſinners ſhall win near him, and be made one with him here, and enjoy him hereafter ; as their portion for ever ; he is the main text of it all : And whatever declareth not Chriſt, and doth not point him forth, in his uſefulneſs, worth and excellency, and driveth not at the ſetting forth of noble Jeſus, cannot be accounted a preaching of the goſpel ; it is *the preaching of Chriſt Jeſus* : the goſpel holds him forth as a *Jeſus*, to ſave his people from their ſins, and a *Chriſt*, as anointed to be Prieſt, Prophet and King.

VII. This goſpel and news of ſalvation, thro' a crucified Chriſt, is an excellent, divine, precious and myſterious thing ; the worth of it is not notour to every one, however carnal wretches think little thing of it ; hence it is called a *myſtery*. See Eph. vi. 19. Col. iv. 3.

VIII. Tho', ſhortly after the fall, God was pleaſed to make known his purpoſe of grace to Adam, and made a promiſe of a Saviour, and ſtill forward, the Lord made the light and knowledge of this appear more and more ; yet all that while, until Chriſt the promiſed Meſſiah came, this buſineſs was kept up under vails, manifested but darkly in promiſes, prophecies, types, and figures, and the like ; and ſo in compariſon of the manifeſtation which was made afterward, it might truly be ſaid to be *kept ſecret ſince the world began.*

IX. This glorious myſtery that was long veiled and kept cloſe, was at length clearly, fully, and perſpicuouſly unfolded and made plain and eaſy : When Chriſt came, and the ſummer-day of the goſpel began to dawn, this glorious ſun began to ſhine in brightneſs, without clouds : it is now revealed, *made manifeſt, and known.* See Eph. i. 9.

X. Tho' it ſeemed good in the eyes of the only wiſe God, to reſerve the clear and perſpicuous manifeſtation of this goſpel-myſtery unto our times ; yet the ages before

fore had the same gospel among their hands, the same way of salvation and not another; it was the same day-light, tho' then but clearing before the sun-rise; for the substance of this doctrine was in the doctrine of the prophets; *and by the scriptures of the prophets, &c.*

XI. It is a course evidently tending unto the ruin and destruction of the gospel, to cast by the Old Testament scriptures, as wholly useless now unto us, seeing the truth of the gospel is confirmed by the doctrine of the prophets, and the doctrine of the gospel is but a clear comment on the prophets: It is made known *by the scriptures of the prophets.*

XII. This explanation and clear unfolding of this excellent mystery, was the contrivance and work of the great God of heaven and earth, and it was done by warrant and command of him, and therefore we must give ear thereunto, as the truth of God: And Jesus Christ, the author of this gospel, is the unchangeable Jehovah; for he it was that gave commandment to his apostles to preach the gospel to all nations: This manifestation is said to be done *according to the commandment of the everlasting God.*

XIII. God is eternal in his being; the Ancient of days, being without beginning and ending, and so is the unchangeable Jehovah, that altereth not, for all the changes and alterations that are in his dispensations; tho' he measured out one way to his old people, and kepted his gospel in the dark to them, and took another course with us, revealing the same more clearly; yet this was according to the command of the *everlasting God.*

XIV. As gospel light is now broken up more clearly than under the law, so this light is diffused far and wide, and the light thereof is not hemed in within the limits and borders of one kingdom, but is sent abroad to all nations, kindreds and languages without exception: No nation now is legally debarred and excluded, but

the door is cast open unto all; *Made known to all nations.*

XV. The main and only thing which the preaching and unfolding of the excellent mysteries of the gospel driveth at, is the gaining of the consent of sinners, and their hearty welcoming of the offered Mediator therein, and their willing subjection unto the yoke of Christ; the main proof whereof is, hearty closing with and embracing of precious Jesus for life and salvation; *For the obedience of faith.*

XVI. A gracious soul is so filled with the sense of God's transcendent excellency and worth, that it cannot but be often taken up in sounding forth his praise, and extolling him highly: Oftentimes do we find the apostle expressing his sense of the wonderful greatness and goodness of God; and here in end he says, *To God only wise be glory.*

XVII. God is the fountain of all wisdom, and in him it is, as in its centre; and all the wisdom of the world (which is alienably from him, who is the author of every good gift) is nothing comparable to his wisdom, who is wisdom itself; he is *the only wise God*, whatever sinister thoughts we have oftentimes of his dispensations towards his church and us.

XVIII. Right apprehensions of the transcendent and incomparably excellent attributes of God, especially of his wisdom, in contriving and ordering all things so wisely, and of his power to accomplish his wise and noble designs, and to bring his purposes to pass maugre all the opposition of devils and men, will prompt up a gracious soul to break out in wondering and extolling of this matchless Jehovah: *To him that is of power, (says he) and to God only wise, be glory.*

XIX. All that we can do, for the extolling of this glorious God, is but to wish from our heart, that all things may be so disposed of in a world, as that he may thereby be acknowledged to be the only supreme and unspeakably glorious God, and that

that all angels and men may open their mouths, wide and proclaim the boundless and incomprehensible excellency and glory of God: *To him be glory.*

XX. As no service which we perform, will be accepted without the Mediator Christ, in and thro' whom we must expect to be accepted of God; so our celebrating and proclaiming of the riches and infiniteness of the worth and excellency of God, must be done in and thro' Christ; and in and by Christ, and the way of salvation thro' him, is the infinite wisdom and mighty power of God, proclaimed and clearly set forth; so that by this and thro' this he will get glory: *To him be glory thro' Christ.*

XXI. As the transcendent worth and excellency of God is endless, and the saving fruits of his infinite power and wisdom are endless, so a gracious soul should never weary of ascribing to him the glory due to his name; and the praise of God will be set forth by men and angels, world without end: *To him be glory for ever.*

XXII. As it should be our hearty desire, that God may be glorified and extolled, so should we confidently expect that in all things he will get glory to himself, and persuade ourselves thereof, and in testimony thereof, close our prayers and wishes with an *A M E N.*

Of the P O S T S C R I P T.

YOU find in your Bibles, that at the end of this epistle of Paul to the Romans, these words are set down, *Written from Corinth to the Romans, by Phebe a servant of the church at Cenchrea*; and possibly you may scruple little at that, or the like set to the end of other epistles, but look upon them as having as much canonic truth and authority as the rest of the epistle: Therefore that ye may be undeceived in this, I shall shortly do these two things:

I. Lay down some considerations to discover the naughtiness of these postscripts.

II. Shew how little probability there is for the truth of this postscript here. And,

I. As to the considerations discovering the naughtiness of these postscripts, it is observable,

1st, That we find none of these postscripts set to the end of the epistles written by the other apostles, but only to Paul's; and is it probable, that the Spirit of the Lord would inspire Paul only to set to such postscripts, and none other of the apostles?

2^{dly}, In some of them Paul is spoken

of, not in the first person, as is usual when one is speaking of himself; but in the third person, as that in 2 Tim. is said to have been *written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero*: He says not, when I was brought before Nero; and so it seems to have been written by some other later person, and not by Paul himself.

3^{dly}, They behoved to be written by some since the epistles were written, because the place whence they are supposed to be written, beareth a name which was not in use in these days when the epistle was written, but long afterward: As, for example, that which is added to 1 Timothy, for it is said to be *written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana*: Now, it is observed that Phrygia was never so stiled till the reign of Constantine, about the year 340.

4^{thly}, None of the ancient commentators make mention of them, before Theodoret, about the year 430; nor none since him, till Oecumenius, about the year 1050.

5^{thly}, All the copies which have these postscripts do not agree among themselves; some, for example, say only, *The*

second to Timothy was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the Roman governor the second time; and, The epistle to Titus was written from Nicopolis; and, The first to Timothy is ended; and many copies, both Greek and Latin, have them not.

6thly, Many of them are utterly false; as, for example, that to Titus is said to be written from Nicopolis; whereas Paul was not then come as yet to Nicopolis; for he says, chap. iii. 12. *Be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis, for there (not here) I have determined to winter.* The first epistle to Timothy is said to be written from Phrygia, &c. whereas Athanasius, and others from him say, it was written from Macedonia: and this might be shown of others also.

7thly, So do they bewray their want of authority several ways; as, for example, it is said, *The first to Timothy was written, &c. and the first to the Corinthians, and the first to the Thessalonians;* whereas Paul was not sure if ever he should live to write a *second* to any or all of these churches.

8thly, Many of them are attended with much uncertainty, as might be shown out of the bodies of the epistles; as, for example, the first to the Corinthians is said to be written from Philippi, and yet, chap. xvi. 5. he was yet to go thro' Macedonia; and, verse 19. he sends salutations from the churches of Asia; and so it seemeth he was in Asia at this time; yea, verse 8. he says, *he will stay still where he was, viz. at Ephesus, where that great and effectual door was opened to him, mentioned, 1 Cor. xix. 9.* This might be exemplified in others also, but we suppose we have said enough.

II. The next thing we have to do, is to examine the probability of the truth of this postscript; and to us it seemeth not unquestionable: For,

First, The grounds given by some for confirmation of this are not very clear: As, *1st*, This is given for one ground of

this epistle's being written from Corinth, viz. (1.) That he says, Rom. xvi. 25. he was going to Jerusalem with the contribution from Macedonia and Achaia, and of the contribution of Achaia he was not sure until he came thither. But this will be no demonstration of his being in the city of Corinth at the writing hereof, seeing he might have been in any other city or place of Achaia beside Corinth. (2.) He seemeth to say, that he is upon his journey towards Jerusalem, and so this epistle might be written after he passed from Macedonia and Achaia.

3dly, They give this for another ground, that he commendeth to them Phebe, a servant of the church of Cenchrea, Rom. xvi. 1. which belonged to Corinth. I answer, (1.) This ground will as much conclude, that he was at Cenchrea while he wrote this epistle, and this Cenchrea lay at some miles distance from Corinth. (2.) Why might he not commend Phebe to them under this notion, tho' he had not been in Achaia, let be in Corinth, when he wrote this epistle? Thus we see this reason is not cogent at all.

3dly, They have this for a ground that he calleth Erastus chamberlain of the city, Rom. xvi. 23. and of him it is said that he abode at Corinth, 2 Tim. iv. 20. I answer, (1.) Erastus stayed not always at Corinth, as we see, Acts xix. 22. (2.) Be it so, that he was chamberlain of Corinth, yet Paul sayeth not the chamberlain of this city, but the chamberlain of the city, which he might have said, had he been in any other place of Achaia, or out of Achaia.

4thly, They tell us for another ground, that Gaius is called his host, and this Gaius was a Corinthian, 1 Cor. i. 14. I answer, (1.) Who this Gaius was is uncertain, whether that Gaius of Corinth, or Gaius of Derbe, Acts xx. 4. or Gaius of Ephesus, Acts xix. 29. (2.) Be he Gaius of Corinth, he might send salutations unto the Romans, being with Paul, tho' not in the city at present; and Paul stiled him his host, that

he might set him forth the better unto the Romans.

Secondly, There are some things upon the other hand which make it probable that he wrote not this epistle from Corinth; as this,

1. That if this epistle had been written from Corinth, it was either written when he travelled Greece, Acts xx. and then among other places came to Corinth, or when he was going towards Asia, and sent some before him unto Troas, Acts xx. 4. And that it was not written at the first of these times is clear, because, (1.) During these three months of his abode in Greece, Acts xx. 3. we hear nothing of his going to Corinth: And, (2.) At this time he knew not that their contribution was ready, as appeareth abundantly from his second epistle to that church; but when he wrote this epistle to the Romans, he had gotten up their contribution: It is true he promised to see them as he went to Jerusalem, 1 Cor. xvi. 7. but the Jews lying in wait for him constrained him to go about, Acts xx. 3.

2. Nor was it written at the second of these times; because, (1.) We have no mention made of that either. (2.) He might

possibly be constrained to go by Corinth at this time, when passing towards Asia, as before, because of the Jews. (3.) If he at this time went to Corinth, he did not stay long there, being in a haste to go up to Jerusalem, and to meet again with these he had sent before him unto Troas. It is true, he had made a third promise to see them, 2 Cor. xii. 14. and xiii. 1. but that which hindered before, might hinder now. (4.) At this time neither Timothy nor Sopater were with him, and yet he sends their salutations; they were sent before unto Troas, Acts xx. 4. 5. and that Paul would acquaint them with his purpose to write to Rome is not certain; seeing, 1. He was to make no stay there, but to haste to Troas unto them; and, 2. How knew he of Phebe's occasions to Rome, who is supposed by the postscript to be the carrier of this epistle; and if he knew not of her, nor of any other, how is it probable he would resolve to write however.

Thus we see, there is no very great probability for the truth of this postscript; and therefore we cannot close with it, and others, as any part of canonical scripture, but as added by some inconsiderate author.

F I N I S.

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 John Allan tenant, Paradykes
 Thomas Allan innkeeper, Middleton
 William Allan wright, Park
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Campbell Howison taylor there
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